

Brooklyn Bridge shooting victim dies

NEW YORK (R) — An Orthodox Jewish student shot along with three fellow students on the Brooklyn bridge died of his injuries Saturday, a spokesman for the Lubavitch movement said. Aaron Halberstam, 16, died around 9:50 p.m. (2350 GMT) at St. Vincent's Hospital, said an aide to Rabbi Yehuda Krinsky, a spokesman for the religious group. "Ari is a martyr who died because he was a Jew," the group said in a statement released early Sunday. The aide said Halberstam's family was with him when he died and that his funeral was to be held Sunday in Brooklyn. Halberstam had been declared brain dead by doctors Wednesday, a day after the deadly attack on the four students as they travelled onto the New York landmark. Rashad Baz, a 28-year-old Beirut-born taxi driver, was charged in Tuesday morning's shooting. Two men — Bassam Reyati, 27, owner of the Brooklyn taxi service that employs Baz, and Hlal Mohammad, 32, who runs a repair shop where Baz allegedly drove his car after the shooting — are also under arrest. They were charged with hindering prosecution and weapons possession.

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Israel offers payments to settlers

TEL AVIV (AP) — Israel has agreed to compensate Jewish settler families asking to move out of the occupied territories, an official said Sunday. Rental subsidies of 600 to 800 shekels (\$200-\$250) a month were approved for five families leaving the Ariel and Kiryat Arba settlements in the West Bank, the official said. Hundreds of the estimated 120,000 settlers living in the occupied territories have reportedly sought to be evacuated. Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin also acknowledged to parliament's defence committee a month ago that he had received hundreds of letters from settlers seeking to leave the Gaza Strip, where several thousand settlers live. But he said the government would not help them.

Iran says it will pay creditors on time

NICOSIA (AP) — Iran's central bank, which has been behind on payments to overseas creditors holding letters of credit, will resume on-time payments later this month, the governor of the bank said Sunday. The Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA) quoted Mohammad Hossein Adeli as saying the bank would start issuing new letters of credit starting March 21, the start of the Iranian New Year. He said "all payments regarding the letters would be made on time," IRNA reported. He did not say how the cash-strapped bank would manage to do this. The central bank, whose word was once its bond, has been troubled ever since it started falling behind on payments in mid-1992, when the country eased import regulations and was flooded by consumer goods. Delays on payment of letters of credit have sometimes stretched to 10 months or more.

Marine wounds two Somali youths

MOGADISHU (AP) — A U.S. Marine shot and wounded two Somali youths Sunday who pointed a toy pistol at an Egyptian sentry posted at the capital airport. Later Sunday, two Bangladeshi soldiers and a civilian employee of a U.S.-based construction company were wounded when at least eight armed Somalis ambushed their small convoy in south Mogadishu and stole a company truck, a U.N. official said. Colonel Steve Rausch, the U.S. military spokesman, said the youths were wounded when the Marine fired once from about 300 to 350 metres away with a M-40 sniper rifle. The bullet went through the Somali boy holding the toy weapon and hit a second boy, Col. Rausch said. The boys were about 20 metres from the Egyptian. In the second shooting, U.N. military spokesman Major Christopher Budge said one Bangladeshi was in serious condition with a bullet wound in the back. The other Bangladeshi suffered minor injuries.

Sixth body dug up from British garden

GLOUCESTER, England (R) — British police on Sunday unearthed what they believe is the body of a sixth person at the home of a man already charged with three murders. The suspected human remains were discovered in the western city of Gloucester in the cellar of a three-storey semi-detached house that newspapers have dubbed the "house of horror." Police last week unearthed the corpse of three women in the garden of the house and on Saturday discovered two more sets of remains when they started excavations in the building itself. Frederick West, a 52-year-old builder with some 10 children from two marriages, has been charged with murdering his teenage daughter Heather, who vanished seven years ago aged 16. He has also been accused of killing teenager Shirley Robinson, a lodger at his house who was pregnant when she died, and an unknown woman believed to be in her early 20s.

Israeli calls mount for removing settlers

TEL AVIV (Agencies) — Support grew in Israel's cabinet on Sunday for removing Jewish settlers from the heart of Hebron where some 60 Palestinians were massacred 10 days ago.

But even ministers supporting such a move stressed it could not be seen as giving in to Palestinian demands to renegotiate the Sept. 13 autonomy accord.

Tourism Minister Uzi Barak told reporters that seven cabinet members spoke out in favour of removing the few hundred Jews living among 110,000 Arabs in the West Bank city where a settler killed worshippers at a mosque.

Education Minister Amnon Rubinstein said no decision was taken but the issue would "continue to occupy our attention."

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres said dealing with the settlers now was unnecessary. He said it was most important to implement the peace deal signed in September with the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO).

Israel Radio said two of the cabinet's 16 ministers were against such a proposal. The seven others, including Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, did not voice an opinion.

The cabinet did vote to order the attorney general to charge with incitement anyone who praises the mosque massacre.

Israel TV showed settlers rejoicing and dancing when they heard about the massacre.

This has incensed the Palestinians and moderate Israelis alike.

But Mr. Rabin refused to allow a vote on the issue and deferred further discussion until next week, Mr. Barak said on Israel Radio.

Economy Minister Shimon Shetretet said Mr. Rabin believes "it would be erroneous" to discuss the settlements with the PLO now rather than in 1996 under the terms of the Sept. 13 accord.

But Mr. Rabin is apparently prepared to speed up implementing Palestinian autonomy if the PLO resumes talks.

Officials here said Egypt was trying to arrange a meeting between Mr. Peres and PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, possibly this week, to work out "how to get back to the negotiating process."

Mr. Peres' spokesman, Bahira Burdugo, said the meeting would deal with issues such as the Palestinians' demand for international observers to ensure their protection.

Mr. Arafat arrived in Cairo Sunday.

Mr. Rabin opposes dismantling any of the 144 settlements, which have become a crucial factor in the peace equation since the Feb. 25 massacre carried out by a settler.

The coalition government only has a one-vote majority in the 120-member parliament and Mr. Rabin is leary of making concessions that could trigger a right-wing backlash.

He is also reluctant to set a precedent that could compromise future negotiations with the PLO on the settlements, where 120,000 Jews live, or be perceived to be caving in to the PLO.

Militants are urging renewed attacks to force the government to meet their demands for removing at least some of the settlements.

There is agitation from the Israeli left, too. Tens of thousands of Israeli demonstrators in Tel Aviv Saturday night, demanding the government dismantle the settlements.

The call was especially aimed at those set up by Jewish extremists in heavily populated Arab areas like Hebron.

"Israelis are sick of the settlers and their extremism," said Tzahi Reshef, a leader of the Peace Now group that organised the rally.

However, two polls published in Israeli newspapers last week showed that 52 to 55 per cent of Israelis oppose uprooting settlements in or next to Arab towns.

Baruch Goldstein, the settler who carried out the massacre, lived in the radical Kiryat Arba settlement near Hebron.

An Israeli official, who demanded anonymity, said Sunday Israel was willing to allow international observers deployed even before autonomy is implemented, but rejects

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EU official says security for Palestinians is imperative

DAMASCUS (Agencies) — The European Union's (EU) foreign affairs commissioner Sunday said it was imperative that the U.N. Security Council assure Palestinians that it was exploring ways to ensure their security in the Israeli-occupied territories.

"I think we all agree, the Arab World, the Europeans, the Americans and the Russians that measures have to be taken to enhance the security of the Palestinian people," said Hans van den Broek, who accompanied Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias on a five-day tour of the Middle East.

Greece currently chairs the European Union (EU) commission. Syria is the last stop on a swing that included Tunisia, Jordan, Israel and Egypt.

Mr. Van den Broek, of Holland, said he felt it was absolutely necessary that a U.N.

Security Council resolution assure Palestinians the council is "not only showing compassion with grief and sorrow but we indeed are looking for ways and means to further help ensure security."

Mr. Van den Broek said most responsibility for doing this lay with the Israeli government.

Asked whether Europe would support any U.N. action aimed at deploying peacekeepers in the occupied territories, he said the idea was there and the member states might not only support but also participate in such a force.

But any action should be first discussed and then have the support of the parties concerned to ensure its success.

Mr. Van den Broek, winding up a Middle East tour following the killing of about 60 Palestinians by a Jewish settler in Feb. 25, said all Arab and

Israeli leaders he had met agreed that the talks should resume.

"All the parties we talked to... the Palestinians, the Israelis and the Syrian leadership... nobody mentioned any alternative to the resumption of the peace talks," he said.

Mr. Van den Broek, who is commissioner for external policy relations and common foreign and security policy, added: "But it is quite clear the climate is very much under the mortgage of the Hebron events and it is extremely difficult to continue the talks as if it were business as usual... measures for the safety for the people are at most urgency."

He and Mr. Papoulias had talks on Saturday and Sunday with Vice-President Abdul Halim Khaddam and Foreign

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Egypt gives Israeli Arabs travel papers for Syria

CAIRO (Agencies) — Egypt has given a delegation of more than 50 Israeli Arabs a travel document for their unprecedented visit to Syria, the head of the delegation said Sunday.

Abdul Wahab Darawsh, leader of the Arab Democratic Party in the Israeli parliament, was speaking in Cairo after a meeting with Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa.

"We thank President (Hosni) Mubarak and the Egyptian government for giving us this document so that we can enter Syrian territory," he said.

Israeli media reports said the Syrians had refused to let the delegation in on their usual Israeli papers. It will be the first time Syria has allowed a group of Israeli Arabs to visit.

Mr. Darawsh said the purpose of the trip was to convey condolences to President Hafez Al Assad on the death of his son Bassel in January. "It has nothing to do with the peace process... we are not carrying political messages and we are not playing a political role," he added.

The delegation includes

prominent figures in the Israeli Arab community including another member of parliament, local council heads, intellectuals and journalists.

They expect to see President Assad on Monday.

Mr. Darawsh restated after meeting president Mubarak's top political adviser, Osama Al Baz, that "there is no relation between the delegation's visit to Syria and the peace process."

He added, "as part of the Arab Nation and the Palestinian people, we found that it is our human and national duty to present our condolences to President Assad."

Mr. Darawsh also called upon the Israeli government to respond to Palestinian demands requesting international protection for those living in the Israeli-occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip after the Hebron massacre.

He said he supports resumption of negotiations between the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and Israel, "but Israel has to respond to just Palestinian conditions in order not to give settlers the



Abdul Wahab Darawsh chance to carry other massacres.

Mr. Assad originally turned down Mr. Darawsh's request to visit. After Yitzhak Rabin, Israel's prime minister, cited the cold shoulder as a sign that Syria was not serious about the stalled two-and-a-half year peace talks, Mr. Assad reversed his decision.

The delegation of 57 politicians, academics, writers, journalists and other prominent Arab Israelis is the first of its kind to openly visit Syria.

Syria refused to allow the Israelis to enter on passports issued by the Jewish state, saying this would imply recognition, so Egypt arranged to supply them with temporary travel documents.



Armed Jewish settlers wait for transport at the exit of the Kiryat Arba (AFP photo)

Amman to have limited municipal elections, no say on mayoralty

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Greater Amman will hold its first municipal elections in 40 years once a new law on municipalities goes into effect but Ammanites will only be able to elect two thirds of the municipal council and will have no say on who will hold the mayoralty of their city.

Under the new draft law, which deputies began to debate Sunday, the government would appoint one third of the council as well as the mayor.

The majority of deputies voted in favour of having the government appoint the mayor of the capital despite strong opposition from Islamic Action Front (IAF) and other lawmakers who argued that depriving Ammanites of the right to vote in their mayor is anti-democratic.

But the legislature reduced to one third from half the

number of municipal seats that the government can control when they adopted a proposal to amend to that effect article two of the draft laws.

The proposal was made by former Amman Mayor Deputy Abdul Rauf Al Rawabdeh who supported the government's bid to return the key to the capital's mayoralty.

"Amman mayor is a political front and the achievements of the city reflect on the whole country as much as its setback will hurt the whole nation. Amman mayor should be appointed by the government to ensure that he is qualified until democracy takes roots," Mr. Rawabdeh said.

Deputy Abdul Hadi Majali presented similar views and cited the financial troubles of elected councils in other cities as evidence that appointed councils can do better jobs than elected officials who, he said, would compromise their work to win the support of the

electorate.

Mr. Majali said democracy should be viewed as a means and not an objective, and the focus should be on serving national interests.

Other deputies who supported the appointment of the Amman mayor argued that elections could produce "illiterate" and unqualified persons to handle the affairs of the 1.5 million-strong city whose annual budget is estimated at JD 70 million.

But "why should we question the ability of half the population of Jordan and appoint guardians for (Jordanians) of the highest economic and educational levels?" asked IAF Deputy Abdul Rahim Al Ekour in protest.

"Let's go home," said Deputy Munir Sober, addressing those who doubt the ability of the people to elect qualified representatives.

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House defers debate on insurance law following government request

By Ayman Al Safadi
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Lawmakers Sunday agreed to postpone debate of a draft law on the control of the insurance sector until the government and insurance companies end their negotiations over the draft legislation.

The government last week presented the draft law to the Lower House of Parliament as an urgent legislation but Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday asked lawmakers to put off discussion of the law in light of "new developments" that led to the negotiations.

The government had to present the law to the House as an urgent one because insurance companies stopped selling liability insurance... but they have now reversed their decision and negotiations are underway," Dr. Majali told the House.

House Speaker Taher Al Masri said Dr. Majali had informed him that "new developments" requiring the postponement of the law had emerged.

Deputies agreed with the government that discussion of the draft law should be put off but differed with it on the reasons for the delay.

"Laws should be studied with objectivity and not in light of temporary negotiations," said Islamic Action Front (IAF) Deputy Mohammad Awaida, who charged the government had used the draft law as "a pressure card" against the insurance companies.

"This is unacceptable," he said.

IAF spokesman Hamzeh Mansour said laws governing the country should not be tied to conflicts between officials and a certain sector, adding that the haste with which the government presented the draft law and then asked it be delayed casts doubts on the motivations behind the legislation.

Dr. Majali rejected these arguments, saying the draft law became urgent after insurance companies stopped issuing liability insurance, thus "putting people in danger."

"The cabinet approved the draft law in order to get away from this situation," he said, adding that the conflict erupted when the government turned down the insurance companies' request to double the cost of liability insurance.

After the draft law was approved by the Cabinet, insurance companies reversed their decision and are once again selling liability insurance, he said.

"The draft law is in your hands and under your authority and the (government) will not take the interests of citizens lightly," Dr. Majali told deputies.

Minister of Trade and Industry Rima Khalaf said the draft law was adopted as a result of a general process to review legislation, rejecting accusations it was meant to put pressure on insurance companies.

She said the current law on insurance conflicts with the country's economic strategy that aims at creating a free

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Saleh vows to defend Yemen's unity

SANAA (Agencies) — Yemeni President Ali Abdullah Saleh has accused his southern rivals of conspiring to divide the country and vowed to prevent a split at any price.

Mr. Saleh, a northerner whose feud with his southern deputy Ali Salem Al Beidh over political, economic and administrative reform has thrown the country into turmoil, said unity was a fact of life.

"Unity is a firm reality, a matter of destiny," he said in a televised speech on Saturday night. "Any thinking of secession is out of the question. It will not happen no matter what the price will be."

Mr. Saleh, who with Mr. Beidh united the north and

south in 1990, attacked the government of Prime Minister Haidar Abu Bakr Al Attas, a member of Mr. Beidh's Yemen Socialist Party (YSP). It "does not know the first thing about development, but knows conspiring, deception and sowing seeds of sedition," he said.

The seven-month-old feud between Mr. Saleh and Mr. Beidh has paralysed the government, threatened the unity of Yemen and sparked armed clashes between northern and southern troops.

The two men signed a reconciliation accord in Jordan two weeks ago but clashes between their rival armies erupted a few hours later. Political leaders on both sides have accused the other of failing to implement

the accord.

Mr. Saleh indirectly accused Mr. Beidh's YSP of heightening military tensions. "We warn those who insist on this course (of military tension), that they will pay the price," he added.

He said a joint Yemeni, Jordanian and Omani military committee, which also includes the U.S. and French military attaches in Sanaa, was "working to end the military tension and the 'turn of events' to their original base."

He said the committee was also working for the withdrawal of army units from the former North-South Yemen border areas.

Yemenis, including members of the armed forces, held

Arafat sees mediators in Cairo

CAIRO (Agencies) — Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat flew in to Cairo Sunday to see some of those mediating in the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) dispute with Israel over international protection for Palestinians living under Israeli occupation.

He met Greek Foreign Minister Karolos Papoulias and Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa at Cairo airport and then left to break the Ramadan fast with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak.

Mr. Papoulias, current president of the European Union (EU) council of ministers, had come specially from Damascus for the 30-minute meeting.

Asked on arrival if he thought Israel was serious about peace, Mr. Arafat told reporters: "Till now they didn't implement what we agreed upon."

Mr. Arafat is demanding armed international peacekeepers for the West Bank and Gaza Strip to protect the Palestinians from Jewish settlers like the one who massacred about 60 people in a Hebron mosque on Feb. 25.

The row over the massacre has held up PLO-Israeli negotiations on details of the self-rule agreement they signed in Washington last September.

Even before the massacre the PLO was losing patience with the long negotiations, in which the Israelis were scrupulous about their own security concerns. The PLO is now arguing that they should give Palestinian concerns equal weight.

But Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin, in an interview with Newsweek magazine, again rejected the PLO request for armed peacekeepers.

Neither Mr. Arafat, Mr. Papoulias nor Mr. Musa spoke to reporters after the meeting at Cairo airport.

But before the meeting, Mr. Musa repeated that Egypt backed the PLO demand. "If the settlers are left as they are, free to attack Palestinians the way that criminal did, then we need an international presence," he told reporters.

Newsweek quoted Mr. Arafat as demanding armed international peacekeepers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip to assure that Palestinians are "safe from massacres."

"We are not calling for the moon to make our people safe from massacres," he said in an interview with the magazine.

"Who will protect (the Palestinians)? They will be protected by the settlers? Or by the army which is involved in the massacre?" said Mr. Arafat.

He said that he felt betrayed by the Sept. 13 agreement with Israel at the White House.

"After seven months, since the White House ceremony, nothing has been implemented on the ground. We spent seven months only on the security of the settlers and the settlements."

"Now it has become clear and obvious that it is the Palestinians who are in need of security," he added.

Mr. Arafat told the magazine that he had asked the

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Last respects

Friends pay last respects to the dead next to the coffin of Ahmad Aselah, assistant director of the Algiers School of Fine Arts, who was shot dead by militants in the school campus on Saturday. Aselah, 54, was a prominent Algerian activist who had severely criticised Islamic hardliners who are waging a bloody campaign against the government. Aselah's 22-year-old son, a student at the school, was also killed in Saturday's attack. (AFP photo)



Massacre leaves Israelis stunned, searching

By Dan Perry
The Associated Press

TEL AVIV — The realisation that one man with a sub-machine gun in his hands and murder in his heart was able to set back hopes of peace has forced Israelis to take a hard look at themselves.

Many are anguished that a Jew could commit such an atrocity. After years of confronting Arab resistance, Israelis now must come to grips with Jewish extremists they have long tolerated, even encouraged.

Government leaders set the tone for the soul-searching.

"As a Jew and an Israeli, as a man and a human being, I am humiliated by the shame brought upon us by this lowly killer," Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin said in an introspective speech to the parliament several days after settler Baruch Goldstein killed at least 60 worshippers in a Hebron mosque.

Foreign Minister Shimon Peres called the gunman a Nazi and bemoaned "the confusion, hatred, insanity and loss of

values this event has revealed."

Their words reflected widespread amazement that a Jew, especially a religious one, had perpetrated the kind of act most Israelis associate with their enemies.

"Notice no one is calling Goldstein a terrorist," novelist Robert Rosenberg said. "People can't grasp that a Jew committed an act of terror. But an Arab who carries out such a suicide attack is always a 'terrorist'."

For a country polarised between hawks and doves in a region with no shortage of bloody traumas, the Hebron massacre took on a special resonance.

Even outside the militant settler movement, there were Israeli hawks who expressed support for Goldstein's act.

Doves said it underlined the need for peace.

"This whole thing makes me more sick than ever of the whole conflict," said Dan Greenberg, a 31-year-old dentist. "There's obviously no way we can live together with the Arabs."

His conclusion: Israel must

leave the occupied territories.

Nir Harel, a friend of Mr. Greenberg who formerly supported the right, said he voted for Mr. Rabin's Labour Party in the last election because years of the Palestinian uprising convinced him compromise was necessary. Now he has moved even further to the left and supports a Palestinian state immediately.

In a poll by the daily Yedioth Ahronoth after the massacre, 66 per cent of those responding favoured outlawing extremist groups such as Kach, to which Goldstein belonged. A majority of Israelis still oppose dismantling Jewish settlements in the occupied territories, but the margin is narrowing.

"The more problems of this kind there are in the territories, the more there is a desire to quit the areas," said commentator Amnon Dankner.

Yisrael Harel, chairman of the settlers' council, agreed that the massacre had increased resentment of the settlers and weakened the resolve of Israelis to keep the occupied lands. He described Goldstein

as "a lethal agent in demolishing" the settlement movement.

The settlers council representing the 144 Jewish settlements condemned the massacre, but urged settlers to resist any attempts by Israeli authorities to disarm them.

Mr. Rabin is resisting pressure from both the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) and his own coalition to dismantle Jewish settlements.

The Israeli-PLO accord envisages initial Palestinian autonomy in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank town of Jericho for a five-year period while settlements remain in place, protected by the army.

Such difficult issues as Jerusalem, the settlements and permanent borders are to be raised only in final status talks, which can be postponed up to two years after autonomy is achieved.

Mr. Rabin has described the interim phase as necessary for building mutual confidence, but there is growing sentiment in his Labour Party that it invites violence by extremists on both sides who want to scuttle the agreement.

Experts see host of challenges for Palestinian self-rule

WASHINGTON (USIA) — Myriad challenges will be faced by builders of a Palestinian state, according to panelists at a symposium here.

Meeting at Georgetown University to discuss "Palestinian Self-Government: An Early Analysis," during a symposium sponsored by the Centre for Policy Analysis on Palestine and the university's Centre for Contemporary Arab Studies, five experts debated what still must occur if the Palestinians are to establish a viable government in Gaza and Jericho.

Nabeel Kassis — on leave from his professorship of theoretical physics at Bar Ilan University to be deputy head and director general to the Technical and Advisory Committees in the Palestinian team to the peace talks — examined the "Institutions of Palestinian self-government."

He remarked that one of the greatest challenges to the successful establishment of Palestinian self-government will be security. He pointed to the shootings in Hebron last week as an example of incidents that were delaying progress towards Palestinian self-rule.

Beyond the security issue, Dr. Kassis said there would have to be institutions established to manage political, economic, social, legal and financial

issues of every-day life.

The current technical committees which consist of "teams of specialists in each of the areas" should eventually become a part of the "future public administration system, the self-government and its agencies," Dr. Kassis noted.

The professor explained that the organisation of these technical committees has been made all the more difficult by the Palestinians' "handicap... the legacy... of occupation that left us with little resources to meet a challenge of such magnitude."

Dr. Kassis pointed out that at the time of the September 1993 Israeli-PLO accord, the issues left for later consideration — Jerusalem, the settlements, the borders, the "displaced" — are now complicating the task of achieving self-rule.

Financial problems also hamper progress of the committees. "If you want to create an official body... you need to spend money," the scholar noted, yet the Palestinians are "denied access" to the tax revenues collected and held by the Israelis. Nevertheless, he said, with the assistance of the International Monetary Fund, a treasury department and a tax department will be opened soon. Coupled with the burgeoning private sector involvement, a "crucial" blueprint

for public administration, Dr. Kassis predicted, would emerge.

Dr. Kassis called the "growing emphasis on the private sector" of "utmost importance" to the working of any new Palestinian government, and noted that that is happening quickly, with investment companies and the banking and insurance industries beginning to get involved in the area.

But above all, Dr. Kassis insisted, the most important factor in the success or failure of any future PLO self-government "depends on how things develop on the political front... a politically stable atmosphere is a must."

In discussing "Elections and Popular Participation," Jamal Nassar said that during the interim period, Palestinians are alternately hopeful or terrified. Many fear an authoritarian regime, he said, while others are excited about the possibility of holding democratic elections.

Many would abdicate the notion of a free Palestine if the Islamic group Hamas were to win municipal elections. Many others fear that the September accord will only cement Israeli "hegemony" in the region, or that there will be a "Lebanonisation" of the region, Mr. Nassar said.

A professor of political sci-

ence at Illinois State University, Mr. Nassar cautioned that the "World Bank, western diplomats and intellectuals have put economic development and Westernization as a priority goal of the emerging Palestinian polity, and seem to pay little or no attention to its potential political dangers."

He warned that it would be a mistake to view Palestinian society as backward or underdeveloped. Rather, it should be seen as "a society that has the makings of a participatory democracy" given its acquired "first-hand experience."

Israel, for its part, Mr. Nassar said, is now "aware that it cannot win... (that) Palestinians have withstood the tests of hardship" and must be permitted "a participatory and democratic" society.

Nadia Hijab, considering "Palestinian women: the key to a secular, democratic state," said that Palestinian women have learned in their search for justice to "live their lives on several levels, to survive each day as it comes, yet, to plan for the future."

Ms. Hijab, who is a senior officer with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), is also a writer, journalist and commentator. She stressed that the views she was expressing were entirely her own.

On the future of Palestinian

women, Ms. Hijab said she believes it "highly unlikely" that they will be "pushed back into the home." Comparing the situation of women across the Arab World, she said that Palestinian women were "a bit more advanced" than Algerians and are better compared to their "sisters" in Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Syria.

That does not mean their status is exemplary, however, Mr. Hijab noted that under all the usual indicators of women's status — "education, political participation in the modern labour sector" — the situation of Palestinian women was still "not that good."

In general, women in the Middle East, she said, are accustomed to serving society on a voluntary basis. It is now only a matter of participating in the wage-labour force, which will be a "transition to modernity, from informal to formal."

In some countries, women may have constitutional rights as equality of rights are provided for within the family. But their rights are stripped by individual laws which rule over the constitution. Palestinian women, she said, must assure that, as Palestinian laws are drafted, women are drawn into the economic mainstream.

Until this happens, Ms. Hijab emphasised, i.e. they have access to technology, credit

and training in the workforce, women will not participate equally in Palestinian society.

Now, she said, the time has come to insist on formalising women's roles: "When it comes to formalising institutions, it's never the (right) time, and I think it's really up to a woman to make sure that the time is right."

Moreover, Ms. Hijab said, "integrating women into Palestinian economic development, requires a recognition that they've always had productive roles, and that their roles must be modernised, just as men's (roles) are... to do so, we've got to move beyond the small, 'income-generating projects for women' that development agencies are so fond of. You know, a handicrafts project here or a sewing (project) there or a typing, because 'such projects only serve to marginalise women.'"

She suggested establishing women's research centres, where they can lobby for providing services for the state, rather than simply providing them by themselves individually, without compensation.

In such centres, Ms. Hijab concluded, women would work on "tackling issues not previously tackled; reviewing the 'personal status' laws... to avoid making the same mistakes" within the new Palestinian society.

Somali leaders agree government proposals

CAIRO (R) — Leaders of 12 Somali factions meeting in Cairo have agreed a set of proposals on establishing a central government in the anarchic Horn of Africa country, according to a delegate to the talks.

The talks, led by Somalia's self-styled Interim President Ali Mahdi Mohammad, have gone ahead despite being boycotted by the powerful Mogadishu warlord Mohammed Farah Aided.

"We have come to a common position on the form of the transitional government," said General Mohammad Abshir Musa, leader of the pro-Ali Mahdi wing of the Somalia Salvation Democratic Front.

The 12 faction leaders met Egyptian Foreign Minister Amr Musa Saturday and briefed him on the results of their talks, which take place just four weeks before Western troops are due to complete their withdrawal from Somalia.

Gen. Aided's Somali National Alliance (SNA) has dismissed the Cairo talks as irrelevant but said Somalia's rival factions could meet within weeks on home soil to discuss the future of their shattered country.

"Our aim is to form a government before March 31," Mr. Ali Mahdi told reporters after the meeting with Mr. Musa.

"The G12 are going to reach an agreement and put it in front of the Somalis... we hope all the Somalis will accept this

proposal and form the government as soon as possible," he said.

A source close to the talks said the group, known as G12, had already agreed to propose a rotating presidency in which Gen. Aided, a key figure in any new government, would be offered a place.

"They have agreed on the interim administration. It will be a rotating presidency, a type of national salvation council in which Aided will be invited to take his turn as chairman," said the source, who declined to be named.

"They have also agreed common principles on disarming the factions, but authority for this will be in the hands of the new administration," he added.

Mohammad Nour Aliyu of the pro-Aided wing of the Somali Democratic Movement has been in Cairo but has not taken part in the talks, which have also focused on bolstering local security forces.

The faction leaders, who were due to meet Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak on Sunday, would ask Egypt's help to train and equip a police force, as well as provide transport, communications and small arms. Abshir said on Wednesday.

He said the G12 might ask countries like Egypt with troops remaining in Somalia after March 31 to increase the size of their forces to fill the vacuum left by departing U.S. and European peacekeepers.

Rebels free four relief workers in Sudan

KHARTOUM (R) — Four Sudanese relief workers seized along with a British aid worker by rebels in southern Sudan 11 days ago have been set free, a U.N. official said on Sunday.

Dr. Khalid Adly, operations director in Sudan for the U.N.'s World Food Programme, said the four workers who were seized by the Sudan People's Liberation Army in Atar in Upper Nile state on February 24 had been freed at noon (1000 GMT) on Sunday. Brian Tattersall, the British WFP worker who had been seized at the same time, was released a few days after he was detained. Dr. Adly said the Sudanese nationals had been flown from Atar in a U.N. plane to Malakal, the capital of Upper Nile state. They were expected in Khartoum later on Sunday or on Monday. Dr. Adly said the group had been doing vaccination work and that three of them were there with the U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF). He said there was no plan to stop work in the region, which has been the scene of unrest for years during the civil war which began in 1983, but said the U.N. would seek assurances from the SPLA that safety of its workers would be assured.

Turkey ready to send troops to Bosnia

ISTANBUL (R) — Turkish troops, which have not set foot in the Balkans since Ottoman rule ended there early this century, are poised to join the U.N. protection force in Bosnia, officials said on Sunday. Colonel Dogu Silahcioglu, spokesman for the offices of the armed forces chief of staff, told the Anatolia news agency that Turkey could contribute a brigade of troops but the government had not yet authorised the despatch of the troops to Yugoslavia.

"The armed forces are ready to serve the country in this capacity with dignity everywhere," Col. Silahcioglu said. The Turkish newspaper Hurriyet predicted on Sunday that Turkish troops would go to Bosnia next week at the request of the U.N. to patrol a buffer zone between Bosnian Muslims and Serb forces in Sarajevo. The newspaper, quoting unnamed diplomatic sources, said in a front-page report: "It will be the first time that our troops will step into the Balkans since the Ottoman times." Foreign ministry officials told Reuters a U.N. request had not yet been received by the government.

Security Council approves Kuwaiti payment to Iraqis

UNITED NATIONS (USIA) — The Security Council has given its approval to a plan by the United Nations to compensate Iraqi farmers with 71.5 million Iraqi dinars (about \$24 million) for land lost during the official demarcation of the Iraq-Kuwait border.

Under the agreement worked out by the U.N., Iraqi citizens who found themselves on the Kuwaiti side of the border in the Umm Qasr and Al-Abdali areas will be compensated by Kuwait and are being relocated by Iraq.

The Iraq-Kuwait boundary demarcation commission, set up under the Gulf war ceasefire agreement, completed its work in 1993. At that time Kuwait informed the U.N. that Iraqi nationals would not be allowed to stay in Kuwait but would be compensated for

their private property and assets on the basis of an assessment made by a neutral party selected by the U.N.

Secretary General Boutros Ghali said in a report to the council that all Iraqi nationals in the Umm Qasr area "were relocated without disturbance to other dwellings" Iraq by the end of December 1993 and Kuwait allowed the Iraqis in the Al-Abdali farming area to remain until the end of February to allow them time to harvest their crops. Iraq was to relocate the farmers to parcels of land in Iraq by March 1.

After an assessment by the independent contractor hired by the U.N., Dr. Ghali set the compensation at 56 million Iraqi dinars for 95 farmers and 15.5 million Iraqi dinars for 206 houses.

Kuwaiti emir urges better legislative-executive relations

KUWAIT (R) — The emir of Kuwait has said the government and the opposition-dominated parliament should improve sometimes strained relations and learn to work together better.

The ruler of the affluent Gulf state of 1.5 million people said he was passing through a critical stage.

He repeated a call for Kuwaitis to curb what he called the style of luxury and overspending, saying it led to "arrogance and flabbiness."

In an annual televised address to the nation on Saturday evening marking the holy month of Ramadan, he said: "The brothers in the executive and legislative authorities, and those who bear the trusteeship of this nation and realise deeply the critical circumstances under which we are passing, ought to respect the need of our people for the cooperation of the two authorities on the issues which affect the pre-

sent time of Kuwait and its future.

"We want them to consult not to quarrel, to differ not to antagonise, to criticise not to slander, to hold others accountable but not to seek revenge."

Parliament began sitting again in October 1992 after a six-year break when a general election returned an assembly dominated by an outspoken collection of opposition Islamists, leftists, liberals and democrats.

The emir dissolved the previous assembly at the height of the Iran-Iraq war in 1986, citing security concerns.

The government and assembly have clashed over a range of issues including allegations of corruption in handling overseas assets, awarding of defence contracts and ways of tackling longstanding debts that have enfeebled the economy since 1982.

JORDAN TELEVISION
Tel: 771111-14

PROGRAMME TWO

17:30	Le Monde Sous Marn
18:30	Magazine Local
19:00	News in French
19:15	The World News magazine
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
21:30	The Turkish News
22:00	News in English
22:30	Feature Film: The Rescue
23:30	Sorry

PRAYER TIMES

04:37	Fair
12:04	(Sunrise) Dhuhr
11:47	Dhuhr
15:06	Asr
17:40	Maghrib
18:57	Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Newfield, Tel: 50720
Assembly of God Church, Tel: 62555
St. Joseph Church Tel: 62490
Church of the Annunciation Tel: 61240
De La Salle Church Tel: 60157
Terrasanta Church Tel: 62390

Church of the Annunciation Tel: 62364
Anglican Church Tel: 61051, Tel: 62543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel: 77131
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel: 77521
St. Ephraim Church Tel: 771751
Assiout International Church Tel: 62526
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel: 82452
German-speaking Evangelical Congregation Tel: 604105
The Latter-Day Saints Tel: 654932
Church of Nazareth Tel: 675001
The Evangelical Local Church in Amman Tel: 811295

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

The depression will continue to affect the Amman thus rain will continue to fall accompanied occasionally by thunderous storms with winds becoming westerly. In Amman it will be partly cloudy and there will be a chance for thunderous showers. Winds will be southerly active and seas rough.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

Min. Max. temp.
Amman 10-18
Aqaba 10-20
Dorseth 2-12
Jordan Valley 8-18

Yesterday's high temperatures: Amman 12, Aqaba 25 Humidity readings: Amman 55 per cent, Aqaba 25 per cent

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Maghara 830425
Naroukh pharmacy 831030
Dr. Muhammad al Izza 752971
Dr. Muhammad al Nahaw 819215
Firas pharmacy 601912
Ferdows pharmacy 753636
Al Asena pharmacy 837055
Naroukh pharmacy 839022
Al Salam pharmacy 636201
Yacoub pharmacy 640445
Shamsun pharmacy 637401
Naroukh pharmacy 624672
Naroukh pharmacy 647032

IBBID:
Dr. Muhammad al Hita 27973

Alquds pharmacy (—)
ZARQA:
Dr. Yusuf Harzallah 988075
Khalifah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 601111
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 627777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 775121
Highway Police 843402
Shamsun Hospital 890390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 635800
Price Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467
Complaints 787111
Telephone Information (Directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 601030
Central Amman Telephone 623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs 601101
Jordan Television 775111

Radio Jordan 774111
Water Authority 680100
Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power Company 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53300
Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-53300

IBBID:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)75555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)77275
Ibn al Nafes Hospital (02)34700
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)31411

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport Tel: (08)53300-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

07:10	Sanaa (RJ)
08:35	Damascus (RJ)
09:30	Jeddah (RJ)
09:30	Riyadh (RJ)
09:30	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00	Beirut (RJ)
10:30	New Delhi (RJ)
10:30	New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
17:00	Cairo (RJ)

DEPARTURES

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

06:00	Beirut (RJ)
11:00	Amsterdam, Chicago (RJ)
12:05	Cairo (RJ)
12:15	Frankfurt (RJ)
12:45	Cairo (RJ)
12:45	Dhahran (RJ)
13:15	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
13:30	Dubai, Karachi (RJ)
14:05	Damascus (RJ)
15:00	Jeddah (RJ)
15:30	Abu Dhabi, Muscat (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:35	Cairo (MS)
10:00	Khartoum (SD)
12:25	Muscat, Abu Dhabi (GF)
18:45	Dubai (EM)
01:15	Amsterdam (KL)

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	550/650
Banana	600
Banana (Mukammal)	620
Cabbage	70/40
Carrot	170/120
Cauliflower	220/150
Clementine	200/200
Cucumbers (large)	200/150
Cucumbers (small)	300/200
Eggplant	280/120
Garlic	380/120
Grape Fruit	1100/900
Green beans	220/150
Lemon	850/650
Marrow (large)	180/100
Marrow (small)	150/100
Olives (green)	320/220
Orange	700/500
Onion (dry)	540/300
Onion (green)	350/300
Pear	260/180
Pepper (hot)	850/650
Pepper (sweet)	400/300
Potato	460/400
Radish	290/190
Tomato	480/380
Spinach	270/180
String beans	170/100
	1200/900

HUAZ RAILWAY TRAIN

Dep. Amman 8:00 every Monday
Arr. Damascus

Dep. Damascus 5:00 p.m. every Monday
Arr. Amman 7:30 a.m. every Sunday

MARKET PRICES

Upper/lower price in fils per kg.

Apple	550/650
Banana	600
Banana (Mukammal)	620
Cabbage	70/40
Carrot	170/120
Cauliflower	220/150
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	1200/900

Farmers threaten to strike before Eid

By Nermeen Murad
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan Valley farmers are set to begin an open-ended strike on Wednesday in what threatens to cause a major shortage of vegetables by the Eid Al Fitr (the feast marking the end of Ramadan) expected to start next week.

Farmers, who say that the strike is the "last resort" to bring attention to their problem, blame the lack of post-Gulf War Agricultural policies on the deteriorating living conditions of the agriculture-dependent 20 per cent of the population.

The strike will mean that farmers will stop harvesting their crops as of Wednesday and will not send any produce to the central markets in the Kingdom's main cities.

The action, according to economist Fahed Faneh, "will be suicidal for the farmers and will harm both the consumer and the country."

The work stoppage by farmers will effectively lead to scarcity of agricultural produce within two days of the strike, farmers say.

Dr. Faneh believes the farmers will be especially hurt if they extend their strike for more than one day because "their products cannot be stored and will lose value."

Farmers say that the government has failed to formulate policies that would take into account that most of the Arab neighbouring markets have become closed to Jordanian produce after the Gulf War.

"It is as if the government is not here," an influential farmer told the Jordan Times in an interview. "There has to be a reevaluation of the agricultural policy in light of the current political and agricultural situation."

"What the government should have done immediately after the war is set policies which would guarantee compatibility between production, consumerism and export."

"If the government wanted to avoid the current situation where there is an oversaturation of certain vegetables and fruits in the local market, it should have redirected the agricultural sector," the farmer added.

"Are we working in this field just to meet our local demand or are we a money-making business?" the farmer said adding that the government should have posed that question to itself immediately after the Gulf War's ramifications became known.

Although economists agree that there is a glut in certain vegetables causing a lowering



A father and his daughter shop at a fruit and vegetable market in Amman (file photo)

of prices, such as tomatoes, they argue that farmers themselves should formulate their policies according to the supply and demand formula rather than depend on the government to enforce policies on them.

"The government's input in this regard is minimal," Dr. Faneh argues. He says that farmers should study the market and evaluate what is more profitable for them rather than depend on the government to solve their problems.

Apart from formulating policies, farmers believe that the government has also failed to take administrative decisions which would protect them as well as the consumer.

They say that while the government has fixed the retail prices for vegetables in what it hopes would be a measure that would protect the consumer, it left unfixed the prices at which wholesale merchants buy vegetables from the farmers.

"Have you heard of anything that goes for free," we give out our produce for free," one of the farmers complained. He and other farmers claim wholesale merchants pay less than half the government-set retail price to farmers when they buy truck loads of produce at the central market.

"The farmers believe that the government has played into the hands of the wholesale merchants at the market by giving them a 100 per cent profit margin on produce they buy from farmers."

"The consumer, although there is a set limit from the government, obviously loses because the produce could have been sold to him cheaper, and the farmer is losing be-

cause he is not getting paid even half of what the vegetables are sold for in the shops," one of the farmers said.

Dr. Faneh says the internationally accepted ratio for pricing of vegetables is that the farmer should be paid 30 per cent of the retail price by the wholesaler merchant. But he also explains that this disparity in distribution is because the wholesaler has undertaken the expenses of transporting the produce and packing, which according to the farmers does not happen here.

"The wholesaler merchant pays the farmer 30 per cent of the retail price if he picks his produce at the farm and undertakes all other expenses," Dr. Faneh said. But at the same time, Dr. Faneh faults farmers for not having "cooperative societies for marketing" which then "work as a mediators between the farmer and the wholesaler merchants."

He also criticises the farmers for faulting the government for its hands-off policy and turning to drastic measures such as striking when they should have followed the traditional procedures of holding dialogues with the government.

The farmers, however, stress that they were driven to this drastic action by the "lack of interest" of the government and parliament.

"We have used every possible channel before resorting to this action," one of the active farmers told the Jordan Times.

"We turned to the government with a petition because we wanted to avoid this kind of action," the farmer said adding that "the government ignored our problem which left us no

choice."

The farmers were particularly upset by the agriculture minister's statement to the Lower House of Parliament "which was all rhetoric." According to the farmers, the minister's statement "does not address the problems of the agriculture sector and did not meet the minimum demands to end our strife."

While official statements by the farmers indicated that their problem was mainly one of accumulated interest on agricultural debts, privately the farmers say that if the government worked actively to improve their situation and guaranteed them some profit from their work "then the debts would be no problem."

But before they put aside demands for writing off their debts or rescheduling them on easy terms, farmers want to see concrete action on marketing their produce and redirecting their effort to more profitable ventures.

One of the major complaints by farmers on the marketing issue involves the transportation of their produce. They complain that the prices of transporting produce from farms to the market and the rate of "freight for export are too high."

That is why farmers are demanding that the government allow foreign air carriers to transport Jordanian produce to Europe and lift what they see as a monopoly by the Kingdom's national carrier Royal Jordanian (RJ).

The strikers are expected to hold a peaceful march to the Deir Alla governor on Wednesday and stop their children from attending school.

House approves draft tenancy law

Deputies reach compromise on review of rent rates

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament Sunday approved the draft tenancy law following heated and lengthy debates that extended over four sessions. The draft legislation was approved after deputies reached a compromise over whether the government should raise or lower rents every five years.

The House amended Article 17 of the proposed draft law to oblige the government to consider increasing or decreasing rents every five years to "ensure justice for both tenants and landlords."

The House Judiciary Committee had proposed that the article, which originally gave the government the choice to raise or lower rents, be amended to make it compulsory upon the government to change the rents every five years.

But committee rapporteur

Abdul Karim Al Dughmi proposed the compromise after Minister of Justice Taher Hikmat and other deputies argued against the committee's recommendation.

Deputies in favour of obliging the government to change the rents periodically argued that such an amendment was necessitated by the high increase in rent after the Gulf crisis, when hundreds of thousands of expatriates returned home.

Others supported the amendment in order to raise low rents for properties that were leased years ago and were not adjusted according to inflation and cost of living increases.

Deputy Ali Abul Ragheb said that the measure was essential for "achieving justice" for landlords and tenants alike.

Mr. Dughmi said the amendment was required because the government did not use its right to review rents since 1982.

Mr. Hikmat said that under the proposed amendment, the government will have to adjust rents even if there was no need for such a measure. He said that Parliament can request the government to review rents if the legal reference is restricted to giving it the choice to do so.

"Parliament's surveillance of the government's performance" will ensure that such steps are taken in the future, he said.

The majority of deputies eventually voted in favour of the compromise wording of the article, before approving the draft law in its entirety.

The proposed draft legislation has been in effect as a temporary law since 1982 and was described by many lawmakers as an important and sensitive law since it "affects two-thirds of Jordanians."

Many controversies arose during the lengthy debates on the proposed draft law, especially on Article 5 which stipulates that tenants can re-

main in their rented properties despite time limits agreed upon in the lease.

Article nine of the draft legislation was received with "disappointment" by many downtown Amman merchants who charged it was "unfair." The article stipulates that landlords are allowed to evict tenants to expand their properties only if the building is over 40 years old and if 12 years have elapsed since the signing of the lease. According to several merchants, the article gives landlords the "green light" to evict them whenever they wish and that the (downtown) traders could incur tremendous losses if the law was applied.

The draft legislation will now be referred to the Upper House of Parliament which can amend it, and it back to the House. The draft legislation will have to be signed by His Majesty the King before it goes into effect as law.

Government to cut spending on utilities by 10%

AMMAN (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali Sunday instructed all government departments to reduce their water, electricity, fuel, telephone, telefax, mail and stationery expenses by at least 10 per cent.

In a circular issued Sunday, the prime minister said there was a significant increase in expenses on these items and it was necessary to economise in line with the requirements of the national economic restructuring programme.

The circular called for an end to waste and a reduction in consumption.

Public holiday

In another circular, the prime minister Sunday announced that Eid Al Fitr, the feast marking the end of the holy month of Ramadan, will be observed for four days starting Saturday March 12.

The circular said all government departments and public institutions will remain closed and will reopen for business on Wednesday March 16.

Three new committees formed

Also Sunday the government announced the formation of three committees comprising senior officials to take charge of the economy, services and infrastructure in implementation of public administration reforms.

A statement issued by the prime minister said the committees should hold separate monthly meetings to examine issues facing their respective departments as well as those linked to other departments, exchange information, propose solutions and report monthly to the prime minister.

The statement said every two months the three committees will hold joint general meetings under the chairmanship of His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan in the presence of the prime minister to conduct a general assessment of the committee's work.

Iraq tightens control measures at border crossing to Jordan

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Officials, Iraqi sources and travellers Sunday said the Iraqi government had tightened existing rules as well as imposing fresh measures against smuggling across the border to Jordan in a bid to check the seepage of goods from Iraq, which is under a sweeping international embargo.

Particular attention is given to checking foreign currency and electronic and electrical goods at the Iraqi crossing point into Jordan at Treibell in the wake of a dramatic plunge in the value of the Iraqi dinar since early this year, they said.

In many cases vehicles carrying diplomatic plates are also searched thoroughly before being allowed out, they said.

Iraqi nationals carrying foreign currency with them into the country also face similar problems, they said.

"There does not appear to be any hard and fast rule for the amount of foreign currency one could carry while he or she goes in," said an Iraqi source. "Sometimes even small amounts are seized from travellers."

"On the other hand, many businessmen appear not to have any serious problems," added the source.

Beyond that, however, are stricter measures aimed at preventing imported products leaving Iraqi territory.

the sources said.

"Every piece of baggage is checked very thoroughly and anything that raises doubts that it could be used for commercial purposes is confiscated at the border point before the traveller leaves Iraq," said an Iraqi source.

A traveller reported that two of three Iraqi-made leather jackets he was carrying were seized at the border. "They said they could permit only one for personal use," the traveller told the Jordan Times.

In another case, a foreign journalist who had carried with him extra lenses and other camera accessories on an assignment in Iraq reported that he was not allowed to take them out.

"I had registered my cameras when I went in, but did not bother to do so with the lenses and some other accessories," said the photographer. "On my way out, they said I could carry only the cameras and confiscated the lenses and accessories, saying I could not prove I had taken them with me when I went in. Intervention by Iraqi officials in Baghdad did not help either."

According to experts on Iraqi economy and the government approaches to imports and exports, Baghdad appeared to be concerned that it would have to spend massive amounts in foreign exchange for imports to meet local demands as and when the sanctions are lifted. And,

as such, it wants to retain whatever remains in the country, they said.

Border officials on the Jordanian side said they were finding fewer cases of smuggling and fewer items that are subject to Jordanian customs regulations in travellers' baggage.

"We used to find many travellers, both Iraqis and others, carrying foreign-made cameras, watches, perfumes, electronic equipment, etc., and most of the time levy customs on them," said an official. "These days the flow of such items seems to have dried up."

According to Iraqi sources, the Baghdad government wants to check people trying to take out electronic and electric goods that the country imported prior to the imposition of the sanctions in August 1990.

A massive quantity of such products also ended up in the Iraqi market from Kuwait which remained under Iraqi occupation between August 1990 and March 1991.

The Iraqi source noted that Iraqi rules in force for many years prevent the outflow of goods imported into Iraq without prior government permission, but that the regulations were enforced with relative laxity until recently.

"Now, the rules are enforced to the letter," said the source. "Only those with wasta (connections with influential officials) are an exception."

First census in 15 years scheduled for November

By Ian Atalla
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Authorities in charge of conducting Jordan's first comprehensive national census in 15 years, due to start in November, will place high importance on counting the number of non-Jordanians currently residing in Jordan, "especially those in the labour market," according to Abdullah Al Zu'bi, the executive census director for the Department of General Statistics.

He said he expected to see emphasis given as well to assessing the unemployment rate, prevalent income levels, and the numbers of handicapped and disabled people, although, he stressed, the

specific goals of the census "are not yet finalised."

Mr. Zu'bi added that the counting of foreign workers was a sometimes difficult task but an important one.

"To cope with census logistics, a person to be counted should be met through some fixed place, or household. But most guest workers do not have a traditional form of housing unit. They stay at the places where they work and these are not considered living places," according to Mr. Zu'bi.

He said this difficulty was especially acute in dealing with foreign labourers working in agriculture, and the construction and services sectors were also potential problem spots in this regard.

He foresaw the potential for similar difficulties in counting "nomads, but they are a very small part of the population."

Mr. Zu'bi said the rough estimate of the total cost of the census project was around JD three million.

"Technically speaking, the census is overdue," he said. It had been targeted originally for 1989, but had been delayed for various reasons, although the government's goal is to conduct the census every 10 years.

The three previous censuses were held in 1952, 1961, and 1979.

"The raw data amassed from the survey should be ready for publication by the early second half of 1995, but

evaluative work and the formation of detailed reports and analyses will take some time longer."

The 1979 census counted Jordan's overall population at 2.1 million, but a statistical bulletin issued by the National Population Commission counted the Kingdom's population in 1992 at 3.9 million, and predicted that it would rise to 5.3 million by the end of the century if current fertility rates persist.

The door-to-door canvassing to collect the census statistics will be carried out by some 10,000 government employees, primarily from the Ministry of Education, as well as from various other government ministries and departments.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITIONS

- ★ "Installation" inspired by Azraq by artist Andreja Kuluncic at Darat Al Fann (7:00 p.m.-9:00 p.m.). Also showing "permanent" exhibition of 45 contemporary Arab artists (Tel. 643251/2).
- ★ Art exhibition by artists Widad Al Orfali and Abdul Hussein Twaaj at the Orfali Art Gallery in Um, Uthala (Tel. 826932).
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Ghassan Ayasrah at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition by artist Shaker Al Girmi entitled "Studies in the Jordanian Environment" at the Phoenix Art Gallery for Art and Culture.
- ★ Plastic art exhibition by several artists at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of Jordanian products at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Exhibition of works of art by the Arab Centre for Vocational Training at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Art exhibition by artist Jalal Arikat at Ab'ad Art Gallery (10:00 a.m.-8:00 p.m. except Fridays).

- ★ Art exhibition by several artists at the Alia Art Gallery (8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m.).
- ★ Exhibition of medical herbs at the Royal Cultural Centre.
- ★ Book exhibition at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- ★ Art exhibition by Jordanian artists at the Royal Cultural Centre (7:00 p.m.-midnight).
- ★ Wood carving exhibition by artist Samer Ousama at the French Cultural Centre.

MUSICAL PERFORMANCES

- ★ A one-hour show of a videotaped variety of classical music at the student multi-purpose building at the University of Jordan (12:00 noon-1:00 p.m.).
- ★ Musical performance by the students of Amman National School at the Royal Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

FILMS

- ★ Comedy film in French entitled "La Folie Des Grands" at the French Cultural Centre at 8:00 p.m.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Panel to assess needs of Hebron massacre victims

AMMAN (Petra) — A national committee charged with fundraising for the victims of the Hebron massacre Sunday approved a questionnaire on the status of the victims and their families in order to determine a basis for the distribution of cash assistance, according to the committee's spokesperson Ahmad Helayel. The committee also approved the formation of a panel in Hebron to supervise the distribution of the donations prior to Eid Al Fitr (marking the end of Ramadan). The money will be transferred to the Hebron committee through the Amman Cairo Bank. The committee praised His Majesty King Hussein's stand and that of the Jordanian people towards the families of the victims.

Schools to close for 5 days during Eid

AMMAN (Petra) — All schools will be closed from Saturday March 12 through Wednesday, March 16 in observance of Eid Al Fitr (marking the end of the fasting month of Ramadan), according to a decision by Education Minister Khaleel Al Omari. Schools will open Thursday, March 17 to make up for the extra holiday (Wednesday 16 March), the decision said.

Press department sums up periodicals in Jordan

AMMAN (Petra) — Daily and weekly newspapers published in Jordan number 24, including six dailies (five Arabic and one English), nine weeklies and nine political party newspapers, according to a spokesman for the Press and Publications

Department. The source said six party newspapers have also been licensed but have not yet been issued. The source added that 41 cultural publications, including magazines and bulletins are also issued, 90 per cent of which are issued in Amman governorate. There are six religious magazines issued by religious parties, Islamic societies and the ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, in addition to 82 service-oriented publications, said the source. Six agricultural publications are also issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, public institutions, agricultural companies and associations. Social and medical publications number 22 and 13, the source said.

Jordan, Philippines review trade links

AMMAN (Petra) — Concluding a commercial agreement between Jordan and the Philippines was the main subject of discussion at a meeting between Minister of Industry and Trade Rima Khalaf and Philippine Ambassador to Jordan Rafael Senos. Both officials stressed the need to explore scopes of cooperation and investment between their countries. The Philippines import Jordanian phosphates while Jordan imports clothing and other items from the Philippines.

NAF helps 787 families in Bani Kinaneh

BANI KINANEH (Petra) — The National Aid Fund (NAF) Saturday said that last year it gave 787 families in the Bani Kinaneh district a total of JD225,067 in direct aid. The NAF said in 1993 it also gave low interest loans totalling JD90,000 to needy families to set up small businesses.

Jordan Times

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Reform before raise

THE GOVERNMENT of Prime Minister Abdul Salam Fajal has shown considerable sensitivity toward the welfare of civil servants by setting up a commission to look into the possibility of salary raises in a bid to help them make ends meet. This is a well intentioned step that no doubt state functionaries would welcome, considering their low incomes and constant increases in commodity prices. Recent reports that appeared in the local press speak of granting about 20 dinars to each government employee and pensioner; secretaries general of ministries stand to get bigger raises, and so do deputies, the reports said.

Under normal conditions it would be inexcusable to quarrel with the commission's recommendations for obvious reasons. But there is a problem. It lies in the fact that we have an unemployment crisis that the government would rather forget about. With 14 per cent unemployment in the labour force, according to official figures, there could be no escape from drawing a list of our economic priorities first.

Given the poverty and economic deprivation experienced by many thousands of Jordanians, the top priority should be accorded to the resolution or at least the alleviation of the unemployment problem. Improving the economic conditions of the employed is a fine objective provided it is not at the expense of other more pressing demands on our country. With the resources of the kingdom being indeed limited, the government should address first the unemployment situation. The millions that would have to be earmarked for salary increments could be better invested in economic projects that can generate employment for citizens. The second priority should go to restructuring the civil service, in a way that would reward those who do work and excel. The rest of the bureaucrats are either not needed or some of them in fact hamper work rather than improve it. The government bureaucracy cannot remain as big and inflated anyway, and a system has to be found where employment is created only in the private sector.

In saying this we do not mean to undermine our civil servants. Something along the line of the commission's recommendations should be done to adjust their salary base in a manner commensurate with the cost of living index. Old pensioners constitute the hardest hit category whose monthly retirement pay is no longer sufficient to maintain an acceptable standard of living. But any plan to increase salaries of state employees across the board as it was always done in the past, should not be implemented without overhauling the system first. The cabinet members should have given the country an example to emulate by delaying their decision to hike their own salaries at this critical time. Continuing in the path of the ministers would not be the right thing to do for the Kingdom at this juncture. If anything the tide for wage increases should stop, pending real economic and administrative adjustments that need to be made right away.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RA'I daily Sunday reflected on the situation in the aftermath of the Hebron massacre noting that everything is now quiet following the outcry raised in the past week. "For a whole week we heard Americans, Europeans and Arabs condemning the crime at Al Ibrahimi Mosque, and Arab masses angrily demanding that the negotiations with Israel be stopped immediately and that the Arab states prepare for war to regain their usurped lands," said the daily. But it seems, said the paper, that the Arabs are now sufficing themselves with a demand that the Palestinians be protected from the settlers in the occupied land. This means that we do not mind that occupation stays in place provided that the Palestinians are given protection. It is true that Washington bears the prime responsibility for the continued occupation of Palestine, but Washington can by no means feel as the Arabs do and would not care about the fate of the Palestinians, the paper continued. It is also unreasonable to ask the United States, which is the prime ally of the Jewish state, to judge fairly in our case and serve justice to the Palestinians since Washington can by no means abide by principles and human values in this case, added the paper. As long as the Arabs are dominant and doing nothing regarding the continued atrocities against their kinsmen, the U.S.-Israeli alliance is bound to pursue its plans to humiliate the Arab Nation, the paper concluded.

WE CANNOT predict the outcome of the U.N. Security Council meetings over the Hebron massacre simply because of the current U.S. pressure on council members not to condemn the Israeli action, said Sawi Al Shaab daily Sunday. Washington is continually exerting pressure on the Palestinians to resume the talks with the Israelis to avert council condemnation of the massacre and to avert any move to send U.N. peacekeeping forces to Palestine, said the daily. Of course, Washington cannot give up its backing to Israel under any circumstances and therefore no one expects the United Nations, which is under the influence of the United States, to take any move that would stem Israel's atrocities against the Arabs, the paper said. It is to be noted also that the mass media has embarrassed the United States as well as the Rabin government. But the paper said that by no means can this embarrassment affect the Israeli-American stand vis-a-vis the Palestinians.

WASHINGTON WATCH

Can the troubled peace process be revived?

THE OUTRAGEOUS massacre at the Al Ibrahimi Mosque has done more than cast a pall over the Middle East peace talks. It has had dramatic effects on the Palestinians, the Israelis and the Americans. It has exposed flaws in the process, the underlying vulnerability of the Palestinian and Israeli leaderships, and has deepened division within both societies.

There is no question but that in the end the massacre in Hebron will alter the Middle East peace equation — the question is will it be altered for the good of the process or to its detriment?

And that question can only be answered by the responses that all of the major parties to the talks give to the crucial issues raised by the massacre.

But it is important to note, at this late date, that even if the right responses are given to these concerns, the raw nerves exposed by the massacre may not be sufficiently healed so that the process can again move forward.

Obviously, the most dramatically affected party are the Palestinians. The massacre and its bloody aftermath in which more than 70 Palestinians have been killed (at least 60 in the mosque and the others by the Israeli army throughout the territories) have highlighted the extreme vulnerability and powerlessness of the people under occupation. They are defenseless and unable to effect any control over their daily lives. They are subject to arbitrary arrest and/or detention; collective punishment — house demolitions, roundups and curfews; random and provocative settler violence; acts of humiliation by the occupation army or settlers or both.

For the Palestinian community living under occupation, the Al Ibrahimi Mosque massacre was, in more than one way, a lethal blow. It not only killed defenseless civilians at prayer, but it reminded Palestinians of the collective pain they have endured for the last 27 years. With the population already chafing at the slow pace of the negotiations and the concessions their leadership had been forced to make, the massacre further eroded Palestinian confidence in the peace process itself.

The powerlessness of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation and the asymmetry of power between the Israelis and the Palestinian negotiating teams are a mirror image of each other. Thus the vulnerability of the Palestinian leadership was also exposed by the massacre. In response, the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) announced that it cannot return to the talks until Israel and the world community take certain steps to ensure the security of Palestinians living under occupation and address the issue of Israel's accelerated settlement drive.

"Simply put, the Palestinian leadership feels that it cannot continue to negotiate under the present rules of the game. Their constituency is too aggrieved, too vulnerable and so alienated from the process that further progress or even talks are impossible." Their return to the talks under current conditions would be rejected by the constituency and any deal they might reach would be a dead letter.

While differing conditions have been put forth by different PLO negotiators, the fundamental concerns relate to correcting the vulnerable state of their constituency and the need to restore confidence in the leadership and integrity to the entire process. And though the Israelis may argue with several of the PLO demands, the U.S. appear to be convinced that the PLO's assessment of the political situation is sufficiently correct to warrant some significant actions, if the talks are to resume. Israel and its Labour government has also been affected by

the massacre, though in a more subtle way. The extreme shame and revulsion the massacre provoked in most Israelis was heartfelt, and it has generated an internal debate over what must be done to gain control over those elements of their society who not only reject the peace process but are also willing (and able) to wreck it with acts of provocation and terrorism.

Outsiders can find some of the statements by Israeli leaders to be disingenuous. They can say it was not one lone gunman — the Israeli army has itself committed such atrocities in the past and the racist ideology of the extremist settlers is shared by many figures in the Israeli political mainstream. But one must remember that the Israelis have in the past avoided accepting any part of the blame for acts of violence and shifted it off on others; whereas this time they simply accepted that one of their own had committed this horrible act.

"Simply put, the Palestinian leadership feels that it cannot continue to negotiate under the present rules of the game. Their constituency is too aggrieved, too vulnerable and so alienated from the process that further progress or even talks are impossible."

Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin is acting out of a conviction that the process must go forward. He feels restraint from the right wing (which is one-half of the Israeli Knesset and public opinion) and from the mass psychology of anti-Arab fear and "Eretz Israel" sentiment that right-wing and centrist Israeli politicians have created over the past few decades. But he has been seeking a showdown with the extremists whom he feels are a real threat to peace, so he decided to act — but in a limited way — by disarming some settlers and to agree to some international presence (though not a force and only in a very limited area).

The problem for both Mr. Rabin and Mr. Arafat (and, I would add, for mainstream Jewish-American and Arab-American leaders) is that while they are invested in each other and in making their shared process work, and while the mainstream of opinion in both communities remains supportive of them, there is a growing base of opinion that not only rejects their views and their leadership but also has become extremely harsh in their rhetoric and actions and is almost beyond their reach or control.

Can they regain lost ground? Can they rejuvenate their leaderships with a dramatic new deal that generates excitement and support and rekindles the spirit of hope of last Sept. 13th? Given the limited manoeuvrability of both leaderships, the answer to this question lies with the critical role that must be played by the third major party to the talks: the U.S. administration.

The Clinton administration has been working full time to find a way to resolve the impasse created by the massacre and reconvene the peace talks in Washington. It is fascinating to watch the change in how this administration is dealing with both the issues raised by this crisis and how they are dealing with both Arabs and Jews in an effort to find a solution and create a constituency that will support the peace process.

From Secretary of State Warren Christopher's strong words of praise for Mr. Arafat's leadership and his compassion here for Palestinian victims, it is clear that there has been a change here in Washington. There can be no peace without the PLO, that is clear, but added to that is the realisation that unless the issues raised by the massacre are adequately addressed, the PLO will not be at the peace talks. So the order of the day is to find a way to take effective steps to create Palestinian confidence in the process and in the ability of their leadership to deliver on their security concerns so that the process can continue. At the same time, the administration is wary that it does not push Mr. Rabin so far as to hamstring him domestically.

The search is underway to find the formula and the mechanism that will meet the basic needs of both parties — this is new. Palestinian security, at least on this level has now, for the first time, entered the political equation in Washington.

One sign of the administration's sensitivity to this new concern has been its intense consultation with Arab-Americans. In the past week, there have been regular Arab-American meetings at all levels of the administration, including meetings with both Secretary Christopher and Vice President Al Gore. At these meetings, Arab-Americans raised these issues:

- Providing international protection for Palestinians in the occupied territories;
- The need to disarm the settlers in the West Bank and Gaza and regulation of their behaviour by the Israeli army;
- A full investigation of the connection Jewish extremist groups have with funding and training in the U.S. and a declaration of these groups as domestic terrorist groups;
- And U.S. pressure on Israeli to stop building new settlements and confiscating land in all the occupied territories.

To all of these concerns, the administration has been sympathetic and responsive. While not agreeing on all the details of the Arab position, the administration is clearly making an effort to work to address these concerns so as to move the process forward.

The administration remains convinced that the best solution to the entire crisis is for the PLO and Israel to come to an agreement, which will begin the process of Israeli withdrawal and will establish, in Secretary Christopher's words, "Palestinian control over their own lives," and will create new conditions on the ground in the relations between Palestinian and Israelis.

Palestinians agree, of course, with this assessment and would therefore like to return to the talks as soon as conditions are met that would enable them to do so with integrity. With the U.S. realising their dilemma and pressing for stronger terms that will meet Palestinian needs, it may be possible to see a return to the peace talks in the near future.

The question that remains is, will reconvening the peace talks or even completing an Israel-PLO agreement be enough to remove the poison that has so contaminated relations in the wake of the Hebron massacre? In part, time will tell, but so too will the effectiveness of U.S. diplomacy and the commitment of Israel to make real changes that restore Palestinian confidence in the talks and the integrity of the peace process.

The writer is President of the Washington-based Arab American Institute.

M. KAHIL



Hebron massacre exposes futility of Oslo accord

By G.H. Jansen

DURING THE week that has passed since the Hebron mosque massacre on Friday Feb. 25, it has become clear that the most significant and dangerous long-term consequence of the killing is its weakening and virtual destruction of the credibility of the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leadership.

This deterioration has been made evident by two kinds of recent happenings. Television viewers were astounded a few days ago when they saw a crude effigy of a man, a black and white checkered kuffiyeh draped over its head, therefore representing PLO Chairman Yasser Arafat, being burnt in a Palestinian refugee camp while a crowd of refugees cheered and jeered.

The camp dwellers, as they are called, have always been Mr. Arafat's staunchest supporters, his real power base, and for them to turn against him is proof that the fruitless peace process, that began with the wretchedly lopsided Oslo accord, has stripped him of his charisma and the claim that he is "Mr. Palestine."

Further, Mr. Arafat's designated right-hand man in

Jerusalem, the heart of occupied Palestine, is Faisal Hussein, the son of an old Jerusalem family and the son of the Palestinian national hero, Abdul Kader Hussein, who in 1948 died leading his men trying to stop the first Israeli assault on the Holy City. Faisal Hussein is as much loved as respected for his clean, unselfish leadership. Soon after the massacre when rioting broke out in the Haram Al Sharif area of Jerusalem Mr. Hussein dashed to the scene to calm things down. No sooner was he seen than rioters began to stone him and drove him away because, as the rioters shouted, he was, "on the other side."

On Thursday March 3, Mr. Hussein tried to go to Hebron, from which he had been turned away by Israeli police a week earlier, but was turned away again; this time by Hebronite stone throwers. This violent rejection of the leadership of an immensely popular local leader says much more than the insult to the person of Yasser Arafat.

The threat now to Mr. Arafat is not merely to his leadership but to his life. It is now assumed, taken for granted, among Palestinians inside and outside Palestine, that in the not too distant

future, he will be assassinated. The most that is hoped for is that the killer of "Mr. Palestine" will not be a Palestinian (though that is inevitable) and that the killing will not happen on Palestinian soil when he returns in a few months to Gaza or Jericho.

It is not that the mosque massacre produced a sudden and violent revulsion against the PLO. The disgust and disillusionment has been there and growing even before the Oslo accord of last September: because of his autocratic style of leadership which has produced few if any results so far.

Since, for the Palestinians, the root of all evil in the peace process is the unbalanced Oslo accord — which the PLO made a great mistake in accepting — it is not surprising that one of the first Palestinian demands after the massacre is that the "Gaza-Jericho First" accord be renegotiated. But renegotiations are such a basic necessity that it is bound to reappear. Israel, realising that the accord gave it all that it wanted, is now saying that what was agreed must not be touched. This position, if accepted by the Palestinians, must inevitably produce more conflicts because the

accord does not provide any basis for "a just and lasting peace."

The Israelis have backed the PLO into a corner. The organisation's followers are rejecting their leaders because Israel has refused to give them anything positive. The Israelis have only to continue saying "no" for another few weeks for the PLO leadership to be even more thoroughly repudiated and discredited. Thus, when Mr. Arafat, this last week, summoned PLO leaders to the Tunis headquarters for consultations none of the West Bank leaders went. There is a real danger of two PLO's emerging: one inside and one outside Palestine.

Probably the only way Mr. Arafat could regain his leadership, and save his life, is for him to stop following U.S. guidance, meekly and obediently, in the so-called "peace" process. He also has to restart the intifada which has, anyway, restarted of itself, just as it did originally, thus, accepting the obvious fact that the Israelis will give nothing unless they are forced to do so.

The writer is a Cyprus-based writer who is specialised in Islamic and Middle Eastern affairs.

Can Bosnia pact become reality?

By Carol Giacomo
Reuter

WASHINGTON — The United States, having finally gotten directly involved in the search for peace in war-ravaged Bosnia, seems to have scored a success in the Muslim-Croat federation agreement signed last week. But whether this accord can ultimately help return the former Yugoslav republic to any kind of normalcy remains an open question, even to those who worked hardest to achieve it.

As international mediators Lord Owen and Thorvald Stoltenberg, who tried and failed to make peace in Bosnia, were quick to remind Washington, negotiations will not be over until Serbs, the strongest faction controlling 70 per cent of Bosnian territory, are included.

A U.S. official close to the negotiations acknowledged that it may be impossible to bring the Serbs on board. In that case, the hope is that Muslims and Croats will still see the benefit in moving ahead with their federation, he said.

"There is a totally different spirit than in the past... A new level of commitment" that is reflected in the way Muslims and Croats in their agreement attacked and resolved details of important, highly contentious issues, he said.

With the pact, Bosnian Muslims and Croats agreed to form a federation, with a strong central government and substantial local self-government, that would then establish a loose confederation with neighbouring Croatia.

The two groups, allies against Serbs when Bosnia's civil war erupted in 1992, have been battling for territory in central Bosnia for nearly a year.

The accord aims at ending that rivalry, increasing pressure on Serbs to make concessions toward a wider negotiated peace settlement and enhancing the prospects Bosnia can remain a multi-ethnic state that is politically and economically viable.

George Kenney, one of several State Department officials who resigned last year over Bosnia policy, said his initial reaction to the

agreement was scepticism.

The pact leaves military arrangements to be worked out over the next two weeks by a high-level transitional committee and this, he told Reuters, appears to be a major weakness.

Before settling security issues, "I don't see any prospect for a (viable) political settlement," he said.

For the moment, the Muslim-Croat pact, reached after four days of intensive U.S.-hosted talks in Washington, is at least one bit of good news for a state that until recently has had little of that since the Bosnian war began in 1992.

It also is a boost for the Clinton administration whose foreign affairs record is mixed and has been badly scarred by its early wavering on Bosnia policy.

The Americans say NATO's show of strength last month in threatening air strikes if Serbs did not withdraw heavy weapons from around Sarajevo has created momentum to move quickly toward a negotiated peace settlement in Bosnia.

As with the NATO ultimatum, U.S. leadership in the Muslim-Croat pact seems to have been key.

The Muslims have long looked to Washington as protector and sought to have it enter the conflict on their side, which it has now basically done in the diplomatic arena.

U.S. officials insisted they would not pressure the Muslims into a deal but try to get them to sort out their basic requirements for a peace settlement.

Also, U.S. officials said the administration essentially confronted Croatia with an ultimatum.

Croatian leaders were told to forget about annexing Bosnian Croat territory. They were also told that if they joined peace talks this would open up access to Western political and economic benefits and if they did not, Croatia would face isolation and perhaps economic sanctions.

There is nothing like the great moral leadership of the United States," Croatian Foreign Minister Mate Gracic said at the signing ceremony at the U.S. State Department.

Human Rights File

Debating the death penalty

By Dr. Waleed Sadi

WHAT IS it exactly that makes a capital punishment acceptable when a policeman is murdered but not acceptable when the life of a private citizen is taken away. It would seem that the arguments against the death penalty would apply with equal force irrespective of whether the murdered person is an official of the state or not. Many prohibitionists would argue that the most compelling reason against the application of the death penalty lies in the imperfection of the judicial system even in the most advanced countries and the possibility that an innocent man or woman could end up going to the gallows.

There is a current debate in the British parliament about the reintroduction of the death penalty and the forces against this step are submitting over and over again the lessons to be learned from the infamous cases of Guilford Four and the Birmingham Six when the wrong persons were hanged.

In the context of the endemic debate about the issue in Britain, the shadow Home Secretary Tony Blair had this to say in opposition to the death sentence even when the murdered persons are policemen: "The most powerful argument (against the penalty) is the risk that we will kill the innocent." Similar submissions are being heard in many other industrial countries where the wave against this punishment is gaining currency and support. Interestingly enough, all the attempts to reintroduce the death penalty have failed in the Western world, with the exception of the U.S., where the battle between prohibitionists and those who would rather go back to the penalty has been steadily won by the former. In the U.S., where crime is rampant and on the increase, public sentiment is still solidly against the ending of capital punishment.

The underlying factor behind this lingering American position on this severe punishment is the conviction that it serves as a powerful deterrent. What belies this stance is the finding that in spite of the continued application of the death penalty, crime is still on the rise. Other societies have different results, with countries like China and Saudi Arabia pointing out that their respective low rate of crime is directly attributable to the liberal application of the death penalty.

No independent studies have been conducted on this controversial subject to show one way or another and in a conclusive manner whether in fact the capital penalty has a bearing on crime. Strangely enough, the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, which serves as the overall umbrella international forum to examine human rights issues, has yet to embark on such a subject. It would seem such a scientific study of the relationship between crime and punishment is overdue. Only such closer scrutiny of the correlation between crime and punishment would lay to rest all the current debate about the subject.

Having said that, it would be prudent to point out that the subject of the death penalty goes deeper than the deterrent value of the penalty. As stated earlier, one of the strongest arguments against the penalty can be found in the fact that the systems of justice are never infallible to the extent that innocent people can be saved. The war of wits between prosecution and defense, especially in the adversarial system of justice, never guarantee fairness of trials. There is no such thing as perfect judicial examination of crime. As long as this proposition is a fact of life, it would seem that the death penalty would always carry with it the possibility, of innocent people going to the gallows.

This is one side of the question. The other dimension is the right to life that no state must infringe upon even in the gravest of crimes. In this vein, it is often mentioned that only God gives and takes life. As one British MP stated recently during the debate on the death penalty, "If we do incorporate the taking of life, the killing of people, into our legislation, then we have taken the values and the methods of the terrorist, of the gangster, of the gunman, and written it into our legislation."

Of course, this submission can always be rebutted by the equally forceful argument that the lives of people who are murdered are also deserving protection. The question that remains is how to reconcile the two objectives. Many people who oppose the prohibitionists admit that their opposition would have been less dogmatic had there been effective ways to keep criminals and killers off the streets by maintaining an adequate system of incarceration. It is a fact of life that many criminals do not serve their full sentences. It is also a fact of life that legal safeguards for the accused have gone overboard to the detriment of the rights of the murdered ones and the victims of lesser crimes. The legal pendulum has truly swung too far in the direction of the accused and to the extent that many criminals are scot free roaming the streets. The arguments against the death penalty could get a better hearing if such deficiencies in the application of justice are rectified.

The end of an era

Technology transforms journalism in a generation

By Andrew L. Lluberes
USIA Staff Writer

IN A single generation, the historical equivalent of an eye blink, technology has transformed the way news is covered and reported around the world.

The era of pen and pad, typewriters, teletype machines, simple telephone lines and tape recorders, and smoke-filled, overwhelmingly male newsrooms has been replaced by one of computers, cellular and portable satellite telephones, digital audio, and fiber optic and satellite transmission. Newsrooms tend to be smoke-free and now welcome women in droves.

Along with those technological and personnel changes, say four of Washington's leading journalists, has come an explosion in the amount of general and special interest news available. Unfortunately, they add, this has included an enormous rise in the reporting of entertainment and sensationalism passed off as news.

As journalism approaches the 21st century, they see all these trends continuing, with audiences becoming segmented by whether they want quality and substance or entertainment and sensationalism.

William W. Headline, vice president and Washington bureau chief for Cable News Network (CNN), has witnessed all the changes during his 30 years in broadcast journalism, including the rise of CNN and simultaneous decline of journalism at the American television networks.

Mr. Headline, 62, worked at CBS News, home of Edward R. Murrow and a score of other journalistic giants who learned their craft covering World War II, from 1967 to 1983, lastly as Washington de-

puty bureau chief.

Eleven years ago, the then fledgling CNN beckoned, "and in spite of dire predictions of a short-term employment from my many colleagues and the other networks, I decided to go ahead and gamble, and I think I won." Mr. Headline said in an interview at his office.

"I was one of the people who laughed and said things like, 'Who is Ted Turner to get into the news business?' and 'Who has got cable and who the hell is going to be looking at a 24-hour news operation?' None of it made sense."

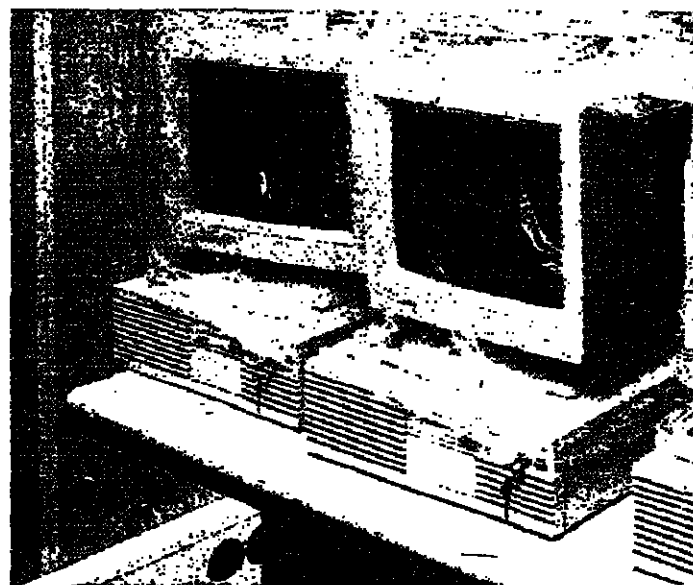
"I was reflecting, I think, a complacency that existed across the broadcast networks. They had the market. They had it locked. Nobody was going to take a chunk out of this niche that they had operating and had had operating for a number of years."

"A guy like Ted Turner came along and said, 'I think there are cheaper ways to do what they do; there are better ways to do what they do, and, by God, we're going to give it a shot.' And he did, and he was absolutely right. No, nobody is laughing anymore."

In television, Mr. Headline said, the most profound changes have been the move from film to videotape "and then the geometric acceleration" in audience.

Television news, particularly from far away, used to be covered by a correspondent and a five- or six-man camera crew, which then had to ship the film and sound tape by plane to a major television centre or back to the United States for processing and transmission.

There is still some shipping, but as Mr. Headline discovered when he accompanied President Bill Clinton on his



Computers bring about a lasting change to the world of journalism (File photo)

recent trip to Europe, CNN was able to use a microwave link between Kiev, a city not visited often by Western journalists, and Moscow to broadcast Mr. Clinton's visit to the Ukrainian capital.

"You know the briefcase-size satellite transmitting dish, it exists," he added. "Governments have been using gear of that kind for years for security operations. That'll all be in the public domain in time, and rest assured we'll use it."

Mr. Headline is concerned about the rise in entertainment-as-news, but not pessimistic for the future. "I'm getting old enough so that I've seen some of these pendulums swing back and forth a bit," he said.

"Maybe I'm crazy," he added, "but I firmly believe that traditional journalistic standards will be well represented in the journalism of the future."

Bill Buzenberg, vice president of news and information at National Public Radio (NPR), has also seen his medium transformed by technology and NPR's audience go from 200 stations when he started in 1978 to 489 across the United States, today, NPR, which has become the U.S. leading radio news

has meant it has had to change "from the organization that started to be just background, in-depth, three-days-later-we'll-cover-it-and-call-it-analysis approach."

It still offers "a lot of analysis," in-depth reporting, and commentary, he said, but now the public radio stations that buy NPR's programming also expect it to be able to go "live for wall-to-wall coverage" when a major story breaks.

Technology has had less of an impact so far at the Washington Post, said Executive Editor Leonard Downie, Jr., who cited the "depth and the authoritativeness" of coverage now expected by the Post and its readers as the major change in his 30 years with one of America's leading newspapers.

Mr. Downie, 51, who started as a summer intern and rose through the ranks, with stints as London correspondent and national editor, said "there's just no comparison in the coverage (between then and now). The stories were shorter, shallower. With some exceptions, most of the reporters were not very deep in their subject, in spite of the fact that there were a lot of good people in the business."

"But... the necessity to be that deep, I think, was not felt. Today, we expect authoritative, in-depth coverage that goes beyond what you see on television."

Mr. Downie believes this trend is true for a lot of newspaper journalism, and certainly for major metropolitan papers like the Post. "And I think that's the right role for them, because we can't imitate television or what the media say. Instead, we are at our best when we complement television and computers and radio by providing what you can't get there... You want to read more in your newspaper."

"And if you give people more in the newspaper, then that means people will continue to buy newspapers. I think that if we stop doing that, we cease to have a reason to exist."

Mr. Downie concedes that the explosion in general and special interest news and growth of entertainment news has segmented audiences, but he does not see that as necessarily a threat to good journalism.

"I think serious interest in serious subjects... is going to continue to be a trend in what is increasingly an information society," he said. "However, that doesn't mean that networks or major newspapers or major general interest magazines are going to survive, a priori, because there are alternative ways of obtaining this information."

Hedrick Smith, who won one Pulitzer Prize and shared another during his 26 years with the New York Times, agrees about the segmentation of journalism and audiences but is concerned for the craft. The author of the best-selling books "The Russians" and "The New Russians," Mr. Smith, 60, speaks from the vantage of having moved from print to freelance broadcast journalism since he left the Times in 1988.

"There is absolutely no question that the news media now are much more greatly influenced by the standards of supermarket tabloids, tabloid television journalism, the entertainment world," he said. "That has had a very bad effect on the quality of news coverage."

"I think every evidence has been over the last couple of decades that the mass marketing of products and the mass marketing of politicians and now the mass marketing of news simply has the effect of lowering the common denominator of the media in general," he added. "That doesn't mean you don't have quality outlets in the midst of all that, and it doesn't mean that you aren't going to get some examples that are going up and improving."

Mr. Smith said the hope for those quality outlets lies in segmented audiences that demand quality news coverage and reporting.

German cities struggle with Bosnian refugees

By Michael Christie
Reuters

MAINZ, Germany — Franjo Crnova, a refugee from the war in Bosnia, shares a cramped stuffy cabin on a German barge with his wife Maria and their three-year-old daughter Renata.

It may not be much, but the bunk bed and the shabby plastic furniture are an improvement on the mortars and sniper bullets the Mr. Crnovas left behind in former Yugoslavia after their home town was "ethnically cleansed" by Serb forces.

"Germany is super," says Mr. Crnova, a 28-year-old

Bosnian Croat. "We have food, heating, shelter."

The Crnovas are among around 400,000 war refugees from Bosnia and Croatia who have been given sanctuary in Germany — more than in any other country outside former Yugoslavia.

But the compassion that drove cities like Mainz, in southwest Germany, to open their doors is threatened by a severe shortage of cash.

Like the federal government in Bonn, local authorities have seen tax revenues dwindle because of recession and the cost of huge transfers to former Communist East Germany.

To try to ease the burden on Mainz and other cities, Bonn decided on Feb. 9 that refugees from Croatia, which has not seen war since an April 1992 ceasefire between Zagreb and Serb secessionists, should be sent home from May 1.

About 20,000 of the 100,000 Croatian refugees in Germany will be affected by the decision. The rest, who come from areas under Serb control, have until June 1995 to pack their bags.

For cities like Mainz, however, the Croatian refugees are a drop in the ocean compared with the torrent of

Muslims and Croats pouring out of Bosnia.

"We're bursting at the seams," said Willi Abts, head of Mainz's Welfare Office. "We're stuffed to the roof beams."

The city of 175,000 is already home to around 1,300 Bosnian war refugees, housed in hotels, disused offices that are due for demolition as well as on the barge on the Rhine, which accommodates 147 people in less than ideal conditions.

Two hundred new arrivals from Bosnia came here in January. The total number is expected to double in 1994,

costing the city 17.3 million marks (\$10 million).

The city, which also houses around 1,700 asylum-seekers from other countries, gets no financial help from Bonn for the war refugees and does not know where it will find this money.

"Mainz cannot shoulder the costs of war in another country," Mr. Abts says.

On a typical day last month, veteran refugee worker Margit Kobold arrived at her office to find 47 people waiting for her.

"They stood queueing all the way down the street, with all their luggage, babies and

children crying," she said. "They turn up with my name on a piece of paper. Word gets around."

She is frustrated at the city's inability to offer more than the basic necessities of life to the refugees, all of whom have their own personal tragedies and many of whom are in urgent need of emotional counselling.

"I have never seen so many broken people," said Ms. Kobold, as she recounted how Mainz cannot afford counselling for traumatised adults and children or the countless women subjected to mass rape in prison camps.

House puts of debate on insurance

(Continued from page 1)

investment environment, ending monopolies and maintaining balance among all economic sectors.

"Our dispute with the companies only led to expediting the legislation... the law was not meant as a pressure card and was prompted by our responsibility towards citizens whose interests were threatened," Ms. Khalaf told lawmakers.

Deputy Saleh Irsheidat questioned the argument of the minister, saying the insurance companies should have been consulted before adopting an approach that could throw the House into "political disputes."

Mr. Irsheidat indirectly criticised Ms. Khalaf for allegedly attempting to win public support by exploiting the issue politically through the use of sensitive words like "monopolies."

"As deputies we are not a party to conflicts. We want laws that protect citizens and we ask the government not to drag the house into political conflicts," Mr. Irsheidat said.

Saying that the insurance sector is one of the most successful industries in the Kingdom, Deputy Ali Abul Ragheb cited the presence of 17 insurance companies in the country

to refute Ms. Khalaf's argument that the market is controlled by monopolies.

Mr. Abul Ragheb asked why the government waited so long to fight "corruption" in the sector if it existed, adding that the way in which the executive authority handled the issue could hurt the national economy.

"This is the season for stardom. One (cabinet) member uses the word mafia and the other uses monopoly to (win public support). This is unacceptable and things should be handled with honesty," said Mr. Abul Al Ragheb in clear reference to earlier charges by minister of Health Abdul Rahim Malhas that a "mafia" of drug and food merchants was abusing the laws.

The house did not set a date for debating the draft law but Mr. Masri said the issue could be tackled Wednesday or in the House's first session after the 'Eid Al Fitr holiday which falls Saturday.

During its session, the House approved two amended laws that increase the amount of financial compensation that army personnel receive upon retirement.

Deputies also cancelled a request for a general discussion of civil service appointments due to the limited time left before the House goes into recess at the end of the month.

EU backs Palestinian demand

(Continued from page 1)

Minister Farouk Al Sharaa on how to revive the two-year-old Arab-Israeli talks.

Mr. Van den Broek later left for home to prepare for a meeting of the EU in Brussels on Monday. He said the meet-

ing would discuss what measures should be taken to revive the talks.

Mr. Papoulas later met President Hafez Al Assad at the presidential palace in Damascus, officials said.

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

TENDER NOTICE ISSUED BY THE "SPECIAL TENDER COMMITTEE" FOR THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

TENDER NUMBER 5/94 DIGITAL TRANSMISSION EQUIPMENT

The "Special Tender Committee" for the National Telecommunications Programme announces Tender No. 5/94 "Digital Transmission Equipment".

This project is one of the main parts of the National Telecommunications Programme which aims to expand the Jordanian Telephone Network.

SCOPE OF WORK

The above mentioned tender (on turn-key basis) consists of design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of the following:

- (70) Optical-fiber links with a total length of 750 km.
- Optical Terminals using PDH & SDH technology
- (13) Microwave links including terminal & multiplex equipment
- (13) Microwave towers
- Supervisory equipment using TMN system.

In addition to that, spare parts, civil works needed for cables laying and towers' erection and training of TCC staff in operation and maintenance are required.

Specialised companies are hereby invited to submit their tenders in accordance with terms, conditions and technical specifications contained in the tender documents.

Tenderers are requested to submit in addition to price offer a financing proposal to finance the foreign currency portion of the contract to be awarded.

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Tenderers are requested to submit their tenders in three separate sealed envelopes as follows:

- Containing the technical offer
- Containing the "Price Only" on cash basis offer
- Containing price plus financing offer i.e.:
 - Price based on financing.
 - The financing offer

Technical offers will be opened and evaluated first. Price and financing offers for technically acceptable offers will then be opened.

Tender documents may be obtained from Tender Section/TCC headquarters, Tower Building as from Tuesday, March 8, against a non-refundable fee of (1500) one-thousand and five hundred Jordanian dinars.

Tenders, accompanied by a tender guarantee, are to be submitted in English not later than 12 a.m. local time on Saturday 18, June, 1994.

The technical offers will be opened in the presence of tenderers' representatives, who wish to attend, on the same date.

Note: The last date for purchasing the tender documents is April, 20, 1994.

Chairman of Special Tenders Committee
Ahmad Al-Nawawi

TELECOMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION

TENDER NOTICE ISSUED BY THE "SPECIAL TENDER COMMITTEE" FOR THE NATIONAL TELECOMMUNICATIONS PROGRAMME

TENDER NUMBER 4/94 DIGITAL SWITCHING EQUIPMENT

The "Special Tender Committee" for the National Telecommunications Programme announces Tender No. 4/94 "Digital Switching Equipment".

This project is one of the main parts of the National Telecommunications Programme which aims to expand the Jordanian Telephone Network.

SCOPE OF WORK

The above mentioned tender (on turn-key basis) consists of design, supply, installation, testing and commissioning of the following:

- (21) Main exchanges
- (80) Remote Subscriber Units (RSU's)
- One training model
- One repair centre
- One network management centre
- Related power, air-conditioning & fire protection.

In addition to that, spare parts and training of TCC staff on operation and maintenance are required.

Specialised companies are hereby invited to submit their tenders in accordance with terms, conditions and technical specifications contained in the tender documents.

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Tenders, accompanied by a tender guarantee, are to be submitted in English not later than 12 a.m. local time on Wednesday 15, June, 1994.

The technical offers will be opened in the presence of tenderers' representatives, who wish to attend, on the same date.

Note: The last date for purchasing the tender documents is April, 20, 1994.

Chairman of Special Tenders Committee
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Kuwait government urged to back bad debt plan

AN ECONOMIC committee Saturday urged the government to throw behind a law to settle bad debts and resist calls for a moratorium to soften the terms.

Prime Minister Saad Al Sabah said the government was considering the law if parliament came up with suitable proposals.

The debt derives partly from the 1982 crash of an unofficial stock exchange used by all sectors of society and partly from commercial losses aggravated by Iraq's 1990-91 occupation.

The names of the 9,546 corporate and individual borrowers including major companies have never been published. Debtors have until an April 1 to choose a repayment option.

"We believe in the neutrality of officials," Al Sabah said. "They have to provide a model for respect of the law and its implementation. This will greatly enhance the law's implementation course. In addition it will reduce the potential for collisions and gradually bring about respect for the law."

Al Sabah, whose director Jasssem Al Saadoun is an economic adviser to the opposition-dominated parliament, said a settlement would give a psychological boost to the economy and remove business uncertainties blocking a series of long-awaited privatisations in the state orchestrated economy.

Meanwhile, a commercial bank survey said Kuwait has set the stage for economic revival by drawing up plans for privatisation, foreign investment and a bad debt settlement, although budget cuts could slow the economy in the short term.

"Kuwait's economy is positioned to experience a turnaround in business and financial activity," the survey by the economic and planning division of National Bank of Kuwait (NBK) said.

"Although the fragile conditions in the international oil markets would continue to be a restraining factor on the capabilities of government to carry out an expansionary fiscal policy, the implementation of the debt settlement programme and other reforms recommended by the cabinet committee and the World Bank should enhance the chances for a better economic performance in 1994," the survey concluded.

The economy is weighed down by a population fall, security worries about Iraq, bad debt problems, a dominant but unproductive state sector and a year-long slide in the price of oil, Kuwait's single natural resource.

The government expects low oil prices will inflate the projected 1.2 billion dinar (\$4.0 billion) 1993/94 budget deficit, already equivalent to one fifth of gross domestic product, by 210 million dinars (\$707 million).

Finance ministry officials say they are discussing a proposal for a 20 per cent spending cut in 1994/95.

The NBK survey added: "The immediate prospects for the economy are for slower growth. The belt-tightening measures and subsequent decline in government expenditure, the main catalyst of business activity, mean that non-oil sector growth is expected to remain moderate in the coming years."

Relations have become increasingly tense since Mr. Hosokawa and President Bill Clinton failed at their summit last month to reach a trade agreement mandated by a bilateral economic framework pact in July 1993.

Mr. Clinton raised the stakes Thursday by reviving super 301, a trade tool designed to open foreign markets in a set

time frame under the threat of U.S. sanctions.

Mr. Hosokawa responded by saying he would come up with some concessions for Washington, rapidly losing patience with Japan's closed markets and its nearly \$60 billion trade surplus with the United States.

The prime minister's office must exercise leadership," Mr. Hosokawa said late Friday when asked by reporters about the U.S.-Japan trade dispute.

"There are some points on which we may be able to do a little more, like the Motorola (car phone) problem, insurance and government procurement," newspaper reports quoted him as saying.

The bilateral trade talks broke down after Japan rejected a U.S. demand for numerical targets to measure market access improvement in such areas as insurance, medical equipment procurement and telecommunications. Tokyo says mandatory targets amount to managed trade.

Foreign Minister Tsutomu Hata said Sunday he hoped to convince Mr. Christopher that Japan was serious about its intention to break the trade impasse.

"I want to tell him that we're making an effort to get something together," Mr. Hata said in a television interview.

"We're going to make a decision (on market-opening measures) by the end of March and various government officials... are hard at work on a plan."

Mr. Hata ruled out setting voluntary "effort goals" for specific market sectors but said the Hosokawa coalition hoped to come up with other proposals.

"I think it's too dangerous to set effort goals as voluntary

targets in specific sectors," he said. "But we might consider a linking domestic demand to a percentage of economic growth."

Mr. Hata said the government was considering firm proposals for trade areas already under discussion — insurance and government procurement of telecommunications and medical equipment.

"On auto parts, our car manufacturers are coming up with their own import plans," he said.

Japanese carmakers have raised the possibility of setting their own voluntary targets for U.S. parts they will buy.

Officials also claimed progress in private-sector negotiations on a cellular-phone dispute involving Motorola Inc. of the United States.

The foreign minister, a central figure in bilateral trade talks, said proposals would also include plans for deregulation, import and investment promotion and policies to improve competitiveness of foreign firms in Japan.

Japanese officials have already outlined similar plans and hinted Tokyo might set a non-binding goal to cut its current account surplus as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP).

U.S. officials have said they were unimpressed. Mr. Christopher however expressed confidence Saturday the dispute would not escalate into a trade war.

"I do not think there will be a trade war," he told reporters in Honolulu as he set out on a tour of Australia and Asia.

The steps the United States has taken are steps that enable us to have a dialogue with Japan. They are steps that look forward to a solution to this problem."

Japan leaders scurry to map out U.S. trade plan

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa and key ministers will begin drafting a package of market-opening steps this week to try to resolve the trade row with the United States, government officials said Sunday.

Mr. Hosokawa told aides he would call a meeting of his senior ministers on Wednesday, the same day U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher arrives to prod Japan on a new trade pact.

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Year of consolidation seen for Europe's car makers

GENEVA (R) — West European car sales are expected to stage a feeble rally in 1994 after plunging by two million last year, the industry's worst performance since the 1980s.

As industry leaders gather here for the first big international car show of the year, analysts say it is hard to see grounds for optimism, at least in the short term. Balance sheets are awash with red ink, costs are still too high and more jobs are on the cards.

Competition already fierce from Japan, is likely to get even tougher as low-cost producers from countries like South Korea and Malaysia ship more cars to Europe.

Not are the new cars expected at the show expected to provide any more optimism among consumers.

"It's boring, boring," said

Peter Schmidt, market analyst at British industry consultants Automotive Industry Data, commenting on the expected lineup of new cars.

The most significant world debut at the show, which is open to the public from March 10 to March 20, is a multi-purpose vehicle (MPV) jointly developed by Peugeot of France and Italy's Fiat. MPVs look more like vans than cars, and can sit up to eight passengers.

German luxury car maker BMW unveils its "Compact", a shortened version of its successful "3" series.

General Motors Europe introduces the Opel Vauxhall "Omega" executive car, and Volkswagen (VW) subsidiary Audi its up-market aluminium-bodied A8. Concept cars on show for the first time include Ford's

rounded little KA, and the Mercedes Swatch town car.

"1994 will be another grim year (for sales), with at best a marginal increase from last year. The bleak outlook will be reflected in the mood of manufacturers, and I'll be surprised if they'll be upbeat," says Mr. Schmidt.

Last year, West Europe's car sales dropped more than 15 per cent to about 11.45 million, the steepest annual decline in 50 years. Analysts believe that this year's sales will at least stop plummeting, and maybe edge up slightly to about 11.6 or 11.7 million.

Most industry leaders agree. London's Economist Intelligence Unit recently interviewed the chief executives of Europe's six big car makers.

Peugeot and Fiat were the most optimistic, predicting

growth of three per cent and 2.3 per cent.

Ford Europe saw a slight increase. General Motors Europe a slight decline. V.W. Germany expected stagnation, while France's Renault hoped the market had hit bottom.

The key to recovery lies in recession-hit Germany, which accounts for almost 30 per cent of the West Europe market. Last year sales there dived by almost one fifth, but portents for 1994 are not positive.

According to London forecaster DRIMcGraw-Hill, Germany's economic woes are not about to be resolved.

"While the German economy appears to have reached bottom, we believe that the recession will end in a period of stagnation, with economic growth remaining close to zero in 1994," DRI says in a report.

Two million people who might have bought cars last year didn't.

Vic Heylen, managing director of Analyse Auto in Antwerp, Belgium said:

"I expect German sales to fall again this year, by about five per cent to 3.03 million," says John Lawson, director of DRI's automotive group. Mr. Lawson expects some of the slack to be taken up by recovery markets in Britain, France, Spain, and Scandinavia, to give an anaemic 1.2 per cent growth to 11.6 million for 1994.

The industry can point to some positive factors. Forecasts for 1995 are much more positive, with growth of up to nine per cent expected. Longer range predictions point to a powerful rally towards the end of the decade.

Paris Club help is vital to Ivory Coast whose total external debt of nearly \$20 billion makes it the world's most indebted country in per capita terms.

President Henri Konan Bedie's government, a rarity because it virtually advocated devaluation, is struggling harder than most to control inflation for the lowest-paid.

It has pegged wage increases to between five and 25 per cent but also tried to freeze prices of essential items until April 1. With prices still shooting up, it announced fines totalling 72 million CFA (\$122,000) on scores of shopkeepers on Friday.

Mr. Bedie and the other presidents of the seven-nation West African CFA group are due to review the devaluation effects on March 15 in Ouagadougou, capital of Burkina Faso.

IMF rushes to shore up stricken Africa franc zone

ABIDJAN (R) — The International Monetary Fund (IMF) is running against the clock to process loans for 13 African countries reeling under the impact of a massive devaluation.

IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus wants all the deals sealed by April so new money can bolster governments shaken by inflation, high wage demands and rumblings of political unrest.

The IMF will help control prices of essential goods and subsidise food projects to give workers a boost, say officials. IMF officials in West Africa said at the weekend.

Senegal's slump, hit by street protests over a 10 per cent pay rise in which six policemen were killed by police, was the worst. The IMF approved a \$300 million loan to Senegal last week.

Niger, another stricken country in the Sahel where

strikes and protests about economic hardship are frequent, was next in line with a \$26 million loan on Friday.

Deals with the fund, dependent on governments agreeing to curb public spending and reshape economic policy, pave the way for other donors to ease debt burdens and inject new cash.

Senegal won quick relief from the Paris Club of creditor nations which agreed on Friday to halve its debt service obligations.

The measure, certain to be extended to the rest of the unlucky 13, effectively maintained the value of Senegal's debt in terms of its devalued CFA currency.

The CFA used in former French colonies was devalued by 50 per cent against hard currencies on Jan. 12. The long-resisted measure was taken when France withdrew

its support under pressure from the IMF and World Bank.

The first CFA devaluation since 1948 exposed exactly how dependent on imports and unprocessed exports of raw materials the African franc zone is. The currency's previous high value made investment in local industry almost pointless.

Inflation for low-earning families has ranged from 15-30 per cent in the zone in the two months since the devaluation, economists say.

African presidents who were forced to swallow the pill are bitter as they watch their people's shocked and angry response.

Congo's Pascal Lissouba, who flies to Paris on Sunday to press France for more help, warned of mass migration to Europe by desperate Africans.

"Africa is not appetising any more because of the end of the

cold war and new interests elsewhere. But its starving millions are at the gates of Europe," he told reporters in Brazzaville.

President Omar Bongo of Gabon organised a protest last week when CFA governments except Ivory Coast's complained at a Libreville meeting of the harsh consequences of devaluation.

Many Western and African economists have little sympathy for the beleaguered presidents, saying their bad management and profligacy are to blame for today's crisis.

Ivory Coast, the world's main cocoa producer and the zone's biggest economy, is expected to get its IMF deal approved within days. Government sources say it will be a three-year enhanced structural adjustment facility (ESAF) worth about \$470 million.

THE BETTER DEAL By Glasberger

"Storey's idea of planning for the future is cloning programs in TV Guide."

JUMBLE THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME By Henry Arnold and Mike Arjouni

LUFUW
MERGI
MAKSAD
PRUBES

Peanuts

OH, I SEE... IT WAS A TRICK QUESTION, WASN'T IT?
NO WONDER I GOT IT WRONG...
CONGRATULATIONS, MA'AM... YOU DID IT AGAIN!

Andy Capp

CAN YOU LET ME HAVE THAT RIVER YOU PROMISED ME, ANDY? I'M ABSOLUTELY BROKE!
NO, I CAN'T. I HAVE A BETTER IDEA...
I THOUGHT WE WERE FRIENDS! I KNOW YOU GOT IT! I JUST SAW YOU CHANGE A TANNER.
OH, SO I GIVE YOU YOUR RIVER, THEN YOU BROKE - IS THAT WHAT YOU CALL FRIENDSHIP?
WHAT GETS INTO PEOPLE THESE DAYS?

Mutt'n'Jeff

WE GOT A LETTER FROM THE LAWYER! MY LATE UNCLE JOE'S WILL IS TO BE READ!
YEH, BETTER GET ON OVER THERE!
UNCLE JOE GLAD I ALWAYS MADE HIM FEEL WELCOME!
HE ALWAYS LIKED ME TOO!
\$500,000 HAS BEEN LEFT TO JUST ONE OF YOU! ALL THE REST OF YOU RECEIVE ONLY ONE DOLLAR EACH!
NOW, WHICH ONE OF YOU IS NAMED FIDO?

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR MONDAY MARCH 7, 1994

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: Not a good day to be making any changes you are uncertain of and could regret later. Be more optimistic about the future and put some distance between yourself and those associates who you feel are in a rut.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Analyse yourself well and concentrate on how to get at the top of your profession. Join in a group affair but be sure to pay your share.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You'll have to do some investigating to get the right answers to a confusing problem. Show more affection to your mate, forget the past.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Come to a better understanding with others who are important in your life. Show some special thought that will be appreciated by all.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Concentrate on highest ambitions and see those who can help you achieve them. Be wise in love matters towards your mate and family.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) You have some new ambition that requires know-how and suggestions from experts, so go after it. Make travel plans wisely for a good time.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) Be precise in handling practical affairs and you make big headway. Show others that you are up-and-doing and anxious for your success.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Any work you do should be done well so that you please others gain more benefits. Put more effort into having more accord with fellow associates.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Make better arrangements for the days ahead so that you cut down on general tensions. Even- ing is an especially happy one for finding relief.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Being particularly thoughtful of kin brings more happiness into the home. Don't neglect to pay utilities, other bills which come around.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Meet with associates and figure out how to improve routines. Visit friends or relatives and have a happy time together on this prosperous day.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get several estimates

before you go ahead with plans for improving property. Don't permit some small problems to get you down in anyway.

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GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Make better arrangements for the days ahead so that you cut down on general tensions. Even- ing is an especially happy one for finding relief.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Being particularly thoughtful of kin brings more happiness into the home. Don't neglect to pay utilities, other bills which come around.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) Meet with associates and figure out how to improve routines. Visit friends or relatives and have a happy time together on this prosperous day.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Get several estimates

before you go ahead with plans for improving property. Don't permit some small problems to get you down in anyway.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Analyse yourself well and concentrate on how to get at the top of your profession. Join in a group affair but be sure to pay your share.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) You'll have to do some investigating to get the right answers to a confusing problem. Show more affection to your mate, forget the past.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Come to a better understanding with others who are important in your life. Show some special thought that will be appreciated by all.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 19) Concentrate on highest ambitions and see those who can help you achieve them. Be wise in love matters towards your mate and family.

AQUARIUS: (January 20 to February 18) You have some new ambition that requires know-how and suggestions from experts, so go after it. Make travel plans wisely for a good time.

PISCES: (February 19 to March 20) Be precise in handling practical affairs and you make big headway. Show others that you are up-and-doing and anxious for your success.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Any work you do should be done well so that you please others gain more benefits. Put more effort into having more accord with fellow associates.

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	VOLUME	PRICE	PRICE	PRICE
ASIAN	194,000	194.000	194.000	194.000
ASIAN	30,644	7.950	7.950	7.950
ASIAN	67,800	2.300	2.300	2.300
ASIAN	54,954	3.300	3.300	3.300
ASIAN	7,803	5.300	5.300	5.300
ASIAN	73,944	3.400	3.400	3.400
ASIAN	20,411	2.100	2.100	2.100
ASIAN	1,128	6.800	6.800	6.800
ASIAN	199,439	4.300	4.300	4.300
ASIAN	1,542	6.800	6.800	6.800
ASIAN	1,840	9.200	9.200	9.200
ASIAN	2,190	4.700	4.700	4.700
ASIAN	84,944	2.000	2.000	2.000
ASIAN	3,440	4.800	4.800	4.800
ASIAN	38,208	2.470	2.470	2.470
ASIAN	10,209	3.600	3.600	3.600
ASIAN	1,138	1.000	1.000	1.000
ASIAN	23,138	2.700	2.700	2.700
ASIAN	2,244	6.400	6.400	6.400
ASIAN	3,190	2.700	2.700	2.700
ASIAN	4,274	2.430	2.430	2.430
ASIAN	1,542	2.700	2.700	2.700
ASIAN	22,444	4.410	4.410	4.410
ASIAN	1,028	1.000	1.000	1.000
ASIAN	10,727	1.140	1.140	1.140
ASIAN	4,130	13.850	13.750	13.800
ASIAN	8,750	3.200	3.200	3.200
ASIAN	9,100	3.840	3.840	3.840
ASIAN	3,495	2.900	2.900	2.900
ASIAN	66,078	3.100	3.100	3.090
ASIAN	3,190	6.700	6.700	6.680
ASIAN	2,719	10.350	10.370	10.380
ASIAN	2,584	6.700	6.700	6.700
ASIAN	3,721	7.150	7.150	7.170
ASIAN	28,951	7.700	7.800	7.830
ASIAN	3,190	6.700	6.700	6.680
ASIAN	750	3.500	3.500	3.600
ASIAN	3,190	6.700	6.700	6.680
ASIAN	9,204	3.500	3.100	3.100
ASIAN	3,190	6.700	6.700	6.680
ASIAN	87,117	15.900	16.000	16.000
ASIAN	3,190	6.700	6.700	6.680
ASIAN	3,013	10.070	10.050	10.000
ASIAN	16,081	0.130	0.120	0.140
ASIAN	3,190	6.700	6.700	6.680
ASIAN	3,033	3.370	3.370	3.370
ASIAN	2,445	6.150	6.150	6.150
ASIAN	4,331	2.240	2.240	2.210
ASIAN	2,445	6.150	6.150	6.150
ASIAN	820	4.400	4.400	4.400
ASIAN	870	2.150	1.340	1.340
ASIAN	2,148	6.380	6.380	6.380
ASIAN	15,000	6.250	7.550	7.500
ASIAN	15,000	6.250	7.550	7.500
ASIAN	14,947	5.400	5.400	5.400
ASIAN	60,149	5.600	5.600	5.600
ASIAN	60,149	5.600	5.600	5.600
TOTAL	1,247,454			

Foreign Exchange Market Summary (February 28 - March 4, 1994)

AMMAN — The dollar appreciated modestly against the mark and yen at the end of last week, while stabilising against sterling. It ended 0.47 per cent higher against the mark and 0.76 per cent higher against the yen.

The U.S. unit retreated against the mark Monday, while rising against the yen and sterling. It declined against the German currency after expectations of a reduction in the interest rate gap between the U.S. and Europe dimmed. This happened in view of two statements that came from the Bundesbank's president and a Fed governor. The president of the Bundesbank said that the German central bank is still cautious in its monetary policy due to factors distorting the M3 money supply. He also added that the inflation danger in Germany is not over, and that the potential for setbacks in the exchange rate and capital market interest rates must not be ignored.

The Fed governor was reported as saying that the recent 0.25 per cent rise in the Federal funds rate would be sufficient to deter inflation in the short-term in the U.S. On the other hand, the dollar rose against the yen in view of profit-taking on the Japanese currency.

The dollar rose modestly against the mark Tuesday, while stabilising against the yen and retreating against sterling. It appreciated against the German currency in view of a statement by the president of the Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco, who said that the recent rise in U.S. interest rates might not be enough to achieve the Fed's objective of controlling inflation. The statement renewed speculation of a near-term Fed tightening which affected the dollar positively, while it had a negative impact on U.S. stock and bond prices. The release of positive U.S. economic reports enhanced speculation of a near-term Fed tightening. GDP figures showed real growth of 7.5 per cent in the fourth quarter of 1993, compared to a rise of 2.9 per cent in the third quarter. Furthermore, the NAPM price index rose to 67 per cent in February, from 59.8 per cent in the previous month.

On the other hand, the U.S. unit wasn't affected against the yen by a statement from one of the U.S. trade representatives. The representative was reported as saying that he saw no risk of Japan pulling out of U.S. money markets due to a potentially weaker dollar during the trade dispute between the two countries.

On Wednesday, however, the dollar retreated modestly against other major currencies. The U.S. unit declined against the yen on renewed speculation of a potential trade war with Japan. The speculation came after a report indicated that the U.S. president intended to revive the legislation known as Super 301 to pressure Japan into opening its markets. However, the intensity of speculation subsided later that day on news that the president had not decided to use that legislation yet. On the other hand, the dollar was affected negatively against the mark by the release of German M3 money supply report. The report showed a rise of 20.6 per cent in January, which dimmed expectations of a Bundesbank monetary ease in the short term.

The dollar rose modestly against the mark Thursday, while stabilising against sterling and declining against the yen. The U.S. unit rose against the German currency as market participants awaited the release of the U.S. payroll report the next day. U.S. jobless claims declined to 318 thousand during the last week of February, which affected the dollar positively against the mark.

The dollar retreated against the yen after the Clinton administration adopted legislation Super 301, which enables it to identify what it considers to be unfair trade practices by a given country and retaliate against it.

On Friday, however, U.S. unit appreciated sharply against other major currencies on speculation of a near term Fed tightening, which occurred after the release of strong U.S. employment data. Nonfarm payrolls rose by 217 thousand in February, after a revised decline of two thousand in the previous month. Meanwhile, unemployment declined to 6.5 per cent, compared to 6.7 per cent in the previous month. The U.S. unit, thus ended the week at 1.7190 marks and 105.60 yen, while sterling ended it at \$1.4895.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 6/3/1994

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.7080	0.7080
Sterling Pound	1.0419	1.0471
Deutsche Mark	0.4059	0.4089
Swiss Franc	0.4653	0.4877
French Franc	0.1197	0.1205
Japanese Yen	0.6628	0.6661
Dutch Guilder	0.3623	0.3647
Swedish Krona	0.0415	0.0417
Italian Lira	0.0000	0.0000
Belgian Franc	0.0000	0.0000

Saudi-led Gulf oil producers defer decisions on cuts

DUBAI (R) — Top Gulf Arab oil producers appeared reluctant Sunday to commit themselves to a decision on whether to cut oil output to help world prices.

Oil ministers of the six nations of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) discussed the international oil market strategy met in the Saudi port of Jeddah late Saturday in a meeting that extended into early Sunday.

They asked Oman to continue its efforts to get non-OPEC exporters to pump less petroleum but gave no hint of whether they themselves would agree to a cut when the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) meets on March 25.

"They're going to leave everything to the OPEC (meeting)," one Gulf oil official told Reuters after the meeting.

He said Omani Oil Minister Said Bin Ahmad Al Shanfari, who is an Omani ministry source said had been in contact with non-OPEC producers before the GCC meeting, would report to OPEC.

The official said this could take the form of telephone calls, a visit to Saudi Arabia or Qatar, a visit by an OPEC minister to Oman, or possibly a trip by Mr. Shanfari to Geneva to brief the OPEC conference in person.

Oman is not a member of OPEC.

The Kuwait News Agency quoted Kuwaiti Oil Minister Ali Al Baghli as saying the ministers did not discuss OPEC oil quotas.

Other brief reports by the official Gulf news agencies, making no reference to whether the GCC had reached consensus on whether OPEC should cut as the northern winter ends, referred mainly to Mr. Shanfari's contacts.

"If they want to go down that line (relying on non-OPEC), I think they've forgotten who is the cartel, who it is that keeps the price up," said Peter Nicol, the London-based director of oil research for Goldman Sachs.

Nonetheless, they also did not rule out making a cut, leading some analysts to wonder if the GCC might not be trying to play the role of a bargainer which does not make the first offer, seeking concrete pledges from non-OPEC first.

Government drafting tax, customs amendments

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — The government is working on amending the income tax structure as well as customs duties on imported products to go partly into force along with the expected introduction of sales tax, officials said Sunday.

They said the main objectives of the amendments were to plug in some of the loopholes that would be created by the introduction of a sales tax.

Officials from the Ministry of Finance and Customs and the Income Tax Department had already put a broad framework for what Finance Minister Sami Gammoh has described as comprehensive reform of the Kingdom's tax and customs structure.

The draft sales tax law, which is now under study by the finance committee of the

Lower House of Parliament, replaces the consumption tax law which took effect in 1992. But the draft reduced the ceiling of the levy to 20 per cent, down from the 60 per cent ceiling in consumption tax.

As such, adjustments are necessary to avoid a dramatic fluctuation in market prices. Mr. Gammoh said last month.

An example, he said, was the customs duties and consumption tax charged on imported refrigerators. Under the consumption tax law, imported refrigerators carried a 55 per cent tax and their local equivalents 15 per cent.

Under the draft sales tax, both imported and locally-manufactured refrigerators would carry a uniform tax of 20 per cent, thus opening the door for a dramatic decline in the price of the imported ones and raising the price of local equivalents.

In order to avoid such a lop-sided situation, the Minis-

try of Finance and Customs is increasing the customs duty charged on refrigerators by 30 to 40 per cent. In addition to ensuring that imports will not have an edge over local products by maintaining the overall landed cost of the importer, the move will also maintain the same level of revenues to the treasury.

In general, the approach is the same towards all other items covered under the draft sales tax law, said an official familiar with the proposed amendments.

The official said the proposed changes to the income-tax structure, expected to come into force later this year, would raise the ceiling on the minimum taxable amount to take into consideration the rise in the cost of living since the tax was introduced in the 70s.

Also under study are provisions enhancing the scope of exemptions from income tax, including rent, family support

obligations etc. The official declined to give specific amounts saying no figures were finalised yet.

In the Lower House, meanwhile, a heated debate is brewing ahead of the expected presentation of the judiciary committee's recommendations on the draft sales tax law.

The committee's recommendations include "major modifications" to the draft law, according to Ali Abul Ragheb, head of the panel.

Any such "major modifications" will inevitably affect the government's expectations of revenues as well as the scope of the tax, economists noted.

Groups such as the Consumer Protection Society and unions as well as the Chamber of Commerce are seeking to influence lawmakers to amend the law to meet their demands.

However, according to parliamentary observers, the law is expected to be endorsed with amendments that would not

seriously affect the government's plans.

"By and large, most deputies have accepted the inevitability of the introduction of sales tax," said an observer, referring to the fact that Jordan was obliged to introduce the levy under the economic restructuring programme agreed with the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

"In the absence of alternatives to address the problems of the economy other than the IMF programme, most deputies, except those who have proclaimed their opposition to the IMF programme in its entirety, will endorse the sales tax law," added the observer.

The 16-strong Islamic Action Front (IAF), three or four independent Islamists and a handful of leftist deputies have already staked a position against the sales tax. But they are unlikely to muster enough support to defeat the law altogether, observers say.

Oslo under pressure to compromise to avoid isolation

BRUSSELS (R) — Norway entered last-ditch talks on European Union (EU) membership Sunday under intense pressure to meet EU fisheries demands or face missing the bloc's train to enlargement on Jan. 1.

Norway was left lagging behind when Austria, Finland and Sweden agreed membership deals last week, opening the prospect of a 15-member bloc stretching beyond the Arctic circle and to Russia's western border.

Norway's failure to get on board with the others, with which it has strong trading

and cultural links, could isolate it from its partners.

The three days of talks starting Sunday on Norway's application were likely to involve more than a little of the EU's traditional brinkmanship.

Spain says there is no question of Oslo joining unless it gives Spanish fishermen access to Norwegian fishing grounds.

"There will be no enlargement if there is no deal on fish," Spain's European Affairs Minister Carlos Westendorp told reporters last week.

Norway, for fear of provoking a "no" vote in a referendum on its entry terms, says it has no fish to spare.

There are two good poker players involved and a lot of cards can turn up. The Spanish are very good poker players and the Norwegians are unbeatable," one EU diplomat said.

Others said Norway would have to concede something to Spain. "I think that Norway will have to give some ground," one EU diplomat said.

Unless the European Parliament receives the results of the negotiations by Thursday, it will be practically impossible for Norway to be admitted on Jan. 1 along with the other three, whose memberships are also subject to referendums.

EU and Norwegian negotiators were seeking Sunday to finalise the last details of a deal on farming and to resolve tricky issues like Norway's decision to resume minke whaling in defiance of an international and EU ban.

Only Monday, when EU foreign ministers formally gather, will the final stages of the negotiations on fisheries begin.

Norway wants to decide management of fishing north

of the 62nd parallel and to conduct annual negotiations with Russia to manage stocks in the Barents Sea. It also wants immediate access to all EU markets for its fish and fish products.

Norwegians narrowly rejected EU membership in a 1972 referendum, fearing a loss of sovereignty, and a poll last Wednesday showed that 42 per cent still opposed entry.

Unlike Austria, Finland and Sweden, Norway already has close security and defence links with EU countries through the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO).

U.S. recovery stays warm through bitter winter

WASHINGTON (R) — Brushing off widespread global economic malaise, a devastating California earthquake and one of the worst winters in memory, the vital U.S. recovery continues to surprise analysts.

The 7.5 per cent jump in gross domestic product (GDP) in the fourth quarter sent some economists back to their computers and raised questions about the Clinton administration's relatively laid-back outlook for the current year.

White House economic advisor Laura Tyson, in a familiar administration refrain, said Friday she remained comfortable with the expectation that GDP would grow about three per cent this year and inflation would follow suit.

Such a forecast is in line with what the administration would love to see happen: A sustainable recovery that remains in place when the next presidential election campaign comes around, analysts say.

At the same time, the administration appears to revel in its role of honest forecaster, pointing out time and again that past administrations often used such estimations to make appear that conditions were better than they actually were.

But some analysts, in trying to get a reading of the recovery pulse, argue that the underlying strength of the recovery is probably stronger than the administration is saying although not so strong as to raise questions about its sustainability.

Others are not so sure, taking the view that there is a lot of uncertainty about the outlook and questioning what is going on with inflation, a debate that has troubled both the bond and stock market which are painfully trying to make sense put of the economic vitality.

"I think the underlying strength of the economy is 3.5 per cent," said Robert Falconer of Aubrey G. Lanston and Co., dismissing the 7.5 per cent jump in the fourth quarter as questionable because of a what he believed was an underestimation of inflation levels.

Like some others, he is walking softly about trying to figure out what is going on in the current quarter, suggesting that growth could be as much as 4.0 per cent.

One key for the year is just how much the economy will come back from the brutal winter, which at times closed shopping malls, shut down restaurants and kept consumers close to home.

At the same time, the impact of the earthquake appears difficult to measure when it is placed against the gathering vitality in other parts of the United States.

"It may be a physical impos-

sibility to measure these things," says Allan Leslie of the Discount Corp., adding "the interpretation of economic data is an art form rather than a science."

Some analysts believe that the rebuilding of the Los Angeles region may turn out to be a plus although others think it is a kind of cynical wishful thinking.

"Many people lost everything, their homes, their possessions, they certainly are not going to come back for a very long time," said Mr. Falconer.

Clearly the snow that swept across the United States will not have a permanent impact.

Lehman Bros economist Allen Sinai takes the view that there could be a snapback in the second quarter. However, like others, he doesn't believe the first quarter was too badly hurt by bitter cold, snow, and the grim damage in California.

The health of U.S. trading

partners and the psychological impact of the administration's decision to reinstate the super 301 trade weapon is also being factored into the outlook.

The weakness overseas seems almost as entrenched as the recovery is in the United States, raising questions about U.S. exports. But so far this has not seemed to trip up the American recovery.

Meanwhile, as they have in the past, most economists are watching the Federal Reserve (Fed) for hints of future activity.

The Fed surprised many on Wall Street last month, hiking interest rates a bit in what it called an attempt to short-circuit inflationary pressures before they got started.

Most think further moves are in the offing, particularly after Friday's surprising decline in the unemployment rate in February to 6.5 per cent from 6.7 per cent.

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Bosnian Serb planes reportedly bomb Muslim stronghold of Maglaj

SARAJEVO (AP) — Serb aircraft bombed a bridge in a Muslim area Sunday, less than a week after NATO jets shot down four other Serb warplanes on a similar sortie, reports said.

The Serb bombing run over Maglaj in north-central Bosnia was reported by Sarajevo radio and Croatian T.V. U.N. officials in Zagreb said they had no information on any Serb attack, and there was no immediate response from NATO or Bosnian Serb authorities.

The media reports said the Serb planes made two runs on the only bridge in Maglaj, a town on the Bosna River, which is destroyed.

Air strikes would be a flagrant violation of a U.N.-mandated no-fly zone over Bosnia, a clear challenge to NATO's demonstrated ability to enforce the will of the international community.

NATO's S-300 missile fighters downed four Serb-piloted warplanes in the central region of Novi Travnik last Monday. That came

just a week after a Bosnian Serb complied with a NATO ultimatum to surrender or pull back heavy weapons from around Sarajevo.

Serbs appeared conciliatory in the wake of the confrontations. But there are recent signs that they are once again testing NATO resolve to maintain the ceasefire.

A Serb-U.N. confrontation continued over six Serb artillery guns the United Nations said were violating a pledge to withdraw all heavy weapons from within 20 kilometres (12.5 miles) of Sarajevo.

But that standoff was easing, with U.N. officials saying the Serbs had agreed to withdraw the Howitzers despite their contention that they were not violating the NATO-mandated exclusion zone.

"They expressed that they will be willing to move their guns out of the place they are occupying right now," said Maj. Rob Annink, a U.N. spokesman, he said he hoped the artillery would be removed Sunday.

NATO resolve in forcing the withdrawal of heavy guns from around Sarajevo and in enforcing the U.N. no-fly zone over

the republic had made the Bosnian Serbs more willing to compromise in the last two weeks.

But in other signs that the Bosnian Serbs may be rethinking their stance, their troops opened fire late Saturday on French U.N. soldiers along Sarajevo's contested Jewish cemetery. U.N. officials called it a deliberate attack on peacekeepers.

One French soldier was slightly injured in the attack, according to Maj. Annink. French troops returned fire. "We think this was deliberate attack on the U.N. troops," Maj. Annink said.

It was the second clash in three days involving French peacekeepers at the cemetery, which lies on a hill in the southern part of Sarajevo. On Thursday, French troops returned fire when Bosnian Serbs began sniping on their position.

With the ceasefire under strain, the U.N. chief representative in the former Yugoslavia, Yasushi Akashi, flew to Sarajevo Sunday. He and the U.N. commander for Bosnia, Lt. Gen. Sir Michael Rose, left for nearby Pale for a meeting

with Bosnian Serb leader Radovan Karadzic.

Maj. Annink also disclosed the U.N. discovery of six Serb 122mm Howitzers late Thursday just inside the exclusion zone around the Bosnian capital. U.N. officials said earlier reports that all but one of the Howitzers had been withdrawn were incorrect.

U.N. officials did not make clear whether Serbs recently had moved the six Howitzers back into the exclusion zone, or whether the guns simply were discovered belatedly.

The United Nations has authorized NATO to bomb any heavy weapons not pulled back from Sarajevo or put under U.N. control.

Despite numerous apparent violations since the ultimatum on artillery passed two weeks ago, U.N. officials maintain that Bosnian Serbs have mostly complied and that NATO air strikes have been unnecessary. But with major powers cool to supply the U.N. with thousands more troops to police the fragile Sarajevo ceasefire, there was concern that Serbs might be testing the international community's resolve.



A U.N. soldier from the Nordic Battalion controls with the support of a tank a passage road in the Dubostica Mountains between Tuzla and Sarajevo (AFP photo)

S. African white right is in disarray

JOHANNESBURG (R) — South Africa's white right-wing has handed pro-election forces a major victory with its internal squabbling over whether to take part in the poll next month, political analysts said Sunday.

Sources close to the Afrikaner People's Front (APF) said the white right umbrella group was deeply divided after one of its relatively moderate leaders, General Constand Viljoen, registered for the poll Friday night.

A full meeting of the AVF leadership Saturday refuted Gen. Viljoen's apparently unilateral move and ordered that the registration be withdrawn.

An AVF source who did not want to be identified said Gen. Viljoen, who had described the registration as a way of keeping the white right's options open, was sharply criticised at the closed-door meeting Saturday.

Newspapers have reported that Gen. Viljoen, who has had several meetings with African National Congress leader Nelson Mandela, has been the target of death threats from radical AVF members who accuse him of being a traitor and sell-out.

Robert Schrire, a political scientist at the University of Cape Town, said the white right had been thrown into confusion by the indecision over voting.

"They at least semi-legitimised the election simply by having admitted the possibility of taking part," he said. "The same logic applies to the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP)."

The AVF, Mangosuthu Buthelezi's Zulu-based IFP and the nominally independent black homeland of Bophuthatswana have formed a "Freedom Alliance" which was initially united in its rejection

of the election at the end of April.

The Alliance said it refused to legitimise South Africa's "fatally flawed" new interim constitution until Zulus and right-wing Afrikaners were assured of virtual self-rule.

But Inkatha broke ranks Friday by registering for the election hours ahead of the midnight deadline. It hedged the move with conditions, including foreign mediation on constitutional amendments and a new elections timetable.

Mr. Schrire said that even if Inkatha did not actually take part in the poll, the possibility of a unified, coherent anti-election stance by conservatives had been badly damaged.

"De Klerk's position has been strengthened," he said. Mr. Schrire said the AVF old-guard, including co-leader Ferdi Hartzenberg, could be expected to stand on their anti-election principles but younger members might rebel to avoid ending up in the political wilderness.

"Despite all the huffing and puffing now, there could be a major realignment after the election," he said.

ANC spokesman Carl Niehaus said the AVF decision Saturday was short-sighted in terms of the future of South Africa and of the movement itself.

"We hope some members will take part in the election regardless," he said.

Pressure is also building on Bophuthatswana President Lucas Mangope, who is due to decide whether to register for the poll at a cabinet meeting Monday.

His ministers have been touring the homeland — divided into seven separate islands — to try to quell a wave of strikes by homeland civil servants concerned at their futures after the election.

White House to reshape health reform debate

WASHINGTON (R) — The Clinton administration is seeking to reshape the health care reform debate to focus on what is at stake for individuals after recent polls showed Americans growing increasingly wary of the president's plan.

The administration and advocates of reform have been distracted in the debate by many of the political side issues that have erupted as lawmakers prepare to draft the complex legislation, complained a top Democratic aide.

"We have foolishly let ourselves be sucked into all of these side battles," the aide said. "It has impaired our ability, therefore, to cut through with the basic message of this is what the plan is, this is how it works for you."

Democrats have grumbled privately that the White House wasted precious time by delaying release of its health care plan last year and failing to

sustain a long-term lobbying campaign for the plan.

The stop-and-start effort gave opponents time to fuel public doubt about the plan and left lawmakers confused, they say.

Health Insurance Association of America (HIAA) ads that use the fictional characters Harry and Louise to raise concern about Mr. Clinton's reform plan apparently have been highly effective.

China detains another dissident

BEIJING (Agencies) — Authorities Sunday detained another top student leader from the 1989 Tiananmen Square pro-democracy movement in a continuing crackdown on dissent, sources said.

Police have detained at least nine dissidents in Beijing and Shanghai since Wednesday in a sweep that has set a sour tone for a visit this week by U.S. Secretary of State Warren Christopher.

Mr. Christopher said in Hawaii Saturday that human rights would be at the top of his agenda when he is in Beijing. The Clinton administration is threatening to strip China of its low-tariff trading privileges with the United States unless it improves its human rights record.

Zhai Weimin, who was released from prison in September after completing a 3½-year sentence for his 1989 activity, was taken away by four people Sunday afternoon outside Qinghua University, according to Wang Dan, another top student leader.

Mr. Zhai was number six on the list of 21 student leaders sought by the government in the crackdown on the 1989 movement.

It was impossible to determine how long Mr. Zhai might remain in detention.

Some of the recent detainees, including Wang Dan and China's most famous dissident, Wei Jingsheng, were let go after about 24 hours. Others have yet to be released.

Xinhua News Agency said in a brief report Sunday that Mr. Wei had been detained because he violated his parole, although it did not state the specific allegation.

Mr. Wei has continued to press for democracy in China since his release in September after more than 14 years in prison. His essays have been published abroad and he has spoken with foreign journalists and the top U.S. human rights envoy.

On Sunday, at least 16 uniformed police and plainclothesmen were stationed outside the apartment complex where Mr. Wei keeps his office, refusing to allow foreign reporters inside.

A prominent Chinese dissident detained by police for four days said Sunday he had been warned to behave during this week's crucial visit of the U.S. secretary of state.

Qian Yumin, 34, a signatory of a "peace charter" asking for moves towards democracy, said police attached to the Railway Ministry, his employer, held him from Wednesday until Saturday

night.

"They warned me to put the country's interest above all. They told me that there were things that were better off not being said," Mr. Qian said in an interview at his house.

He said the police appeared concerned about the March 11 start of the visit of Mr. Christopher, a last-chance bid to warn China to improve its human rights or risk losing billions of dollars in trade benefits from the United States.

Mr. Qian said he replied that everything he did — including signing the peace charter — was done in the country's interest and not his own.

Christopher concerned Mr. Christopher told reporters he was pleased China had released its most prominent dissident, Wei Jingsheng, after just over 24 hours in custody.

"I'm glad to hear he's now been released. But we remain concerned about the dissidents whose whereabouts at least to us are unknown. We're asking for explanations about them," Mr. Christopher said.

Mr. Christopher, touring a centre where the remains of U.S. servicemen missing from the Vietnam War are identified, said Saturday he hoped to visit Vietnam but had no time in his current Asian tour.

Son found living with mother's body

BOISE, Idaho (AP) — An elderly woman lay dead on her living room couch for as long as seven years while her son continued to live in the house. Georgia Farrell probably died in 1987 at age 88. Her mummified body wasn't discovered until Friday, when neighbours went to check on her son, Robert Farrell. "She was laying there like she was watching TV, with her head on the pillow," said Ada County Coroner Erwin Sonnenberg. "It appears she died of natural causes, but we're going to do further investigation." Mr. Farrell, who is in his 60s, was taken to the psychiatric unit of St. Alphonsus Regional Medical Centre for evaluation. Robert McKean, a retired physician who lives in the condominium complex, said another neighbour asked him to check on Mr. Farrell. The neighbour said he saw Mr. Farrell in bed and couldn't get him to answer the doorbell. They entered through an unlocked front door and noticed the body when Mr. Farrell asked them for some water. "Here was this dead woman lying in this dark room," said Dr. McKean, who called police. "Obviously she had been dead a long time."

Chef's choice turns out to be live grenade

OPORTO, Portugal (AP) — Too small... too soft... just right, thought a fry cook in northern Portugal before realising the big, beefy spud he'd pulled from a sack of potatoes was a live hand grenade. Only luck and the cook's light touch kept the pin intact when the explosive was hauled out in the crowded cafe's kitchen, said an Oporto bomb squad officer who later detonated the pseudo-spud. The grenade was aged and crusted with soil but otherwise ready to blow, said the officer, who refused identification in accordance with department policy. Police have ruled out foul play. Their theory is the grenade was inadvertently plowed up and sacked in southern France, where the potatoes were from.

Biggest gay festival steps out

SYDNEY (AP) — Loud and lewd, ribald and rib-tickling, the Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras Parade coursed through Sydney's streets Saturday night, drawing a record crowd of more than 500,000 spectators. Religious opponents rallied nearby, denouncing the event as an example of what happens "when the wicked seize a city." Leading the processions of more than 10,000 marchers were the "Dykes on Bikes," a bevy of leather-clad lesbians riding Harley-Davidson motorcycles in a swipe at the macho man biker culture. Right behind them were the Spokes, a bicycle club of homosexual men wearing G-string, pink balloons tethered to their handlebars. Egyptian motifs followed, with slaves chained together at the neck towing a huge float displaying a kangaroo sphinx with breasts and testicles. Leatherboys flogged the slaves with whips to urge them on. Other floats poked fun at conservatives, moralists and fundamentalist Christians, known in Australia as Wowsers — an old acronym for "we only want social evils remedied." Fifteen marchers masqueraded as the Rev. Fred Nile, the king of Australian Wowsers. They were joined by men in nuns' drag calling themselves the sisters of perpetual indulgence, and the sluts for Jesus, wearing chiffon cocktail dresses and teased-up hair. Nile retaliated this year by sponsoring a religious rally on the afternoon of the parade, just six blocks from its route. Two American preachers, the Rev. Chuck and Donna McIlhenny of San Francisco, preached on what happens "when the wicked seize a city."

Police, he added, had not established a motive for the raid.

Fighting in Bhambayi between ANC supporters and rivals in the Inkatha Freedom Party has claimed around 200 lives in the past year.

ANC-Inkatha rivalry underlies much of the political violence in which around 14,000 blacks have been killed nationwide in four years of apartheid reform.

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Moldovans vote on independence

CHISHINYOV (R) — Moldovans went to the polls Sunday to decide on independence. The vote was expected to produce a no vote in response to nationalist demands for a merger with ethnic kin in neighbouring Romania.

The vote, a week after provincial elections, swept the Communist Party, which has ruled the republic since the end of the Soviet era.

Independence is the first time since the 1991 constitution that President Mircea Snegur will decide the fate of the republic.

The vote should settle all claims over unification with Romania. The people will let the world know that Moldova wants to be a separate and independent state.

Most of Moldova, on the northwestern rim of the former Soviet Union, was a Romanian province until 1940 when Soviet dictator Josef Stalin annexed it.

Nationalists in the republic of 4.5 million people demand unification with Romania. But exit opinion polls indicate that about two-thirds of the

voters will favour independence.

Valentina Vozhova, an ethnic Russian living in Chishinyov, said: "I voted for Moldova's independence because I've lived in this country for more than 30 years. I can only wish it well."

A hotel manager in the capital Chishinyov saw no reason for the referendum at all.

"I cannot understand why I have to vote for our independence when our republic has been recognised by more than 120 countries throughout the world," he said, asking not to be named.

Early turnout appeared low. Moldova's self-proclaimed Dnestr Republic, whose population is mostly ethnic Russian and Ukrainian, has boycotted the vote because it says it is outside Chishinyov's authority. It also shunned last week's polls.

The 700,000 Slavs in the Dnestr Republic and their 800,000 ethnic kin elsewhere in Moldova fear they would become second-class citizens in a merger with Romania.

In 1992, conflict between Dnestr's Slavs and Moldovan

police erupted into a war in which hundreds of people were killed.

Some 150,000 ethnic Gagauz Turks in southern Moldova who adopted Orthodox Christianity are holding a parallel referendum on Gagauz autonomy within Moldova.

The Gagauz leaders lifted a boycott threat in exchange for promises of special autonomy. The main nationalist party Popular Front, which calls for a merger with Romania, won less than 10 per cent of the vote in the election which was won by the pro-independence Agrarian Democratic Party.

The Popular Front said the independence of Moldova, where 65 per cent of the people are ethnic Romanians, was only a transitional period ahead of a merger with Romania.

Mr. Snegur hoped the vote would solve two major political issues — convincing the Gagauz to stay with Moldova and paving the way for negotiations with Dnestr.

"The Dnestr leadership's argument about unification with Romania and forced Romanisation exist no more," Mr. Snegur said.

Ukrainian warheads arrive in Russia

MOSCOW (R) — A trainload of nuclear warheads has crossed the Ukraine-Russia border and will be dismantled by Russian firms, ITAR-TASS news agency Sunday quoted high-ranking nuclear experts as saying.

TASS said the voyage was veiled in secrecy. The train and its route were heavily guarded and there were no plans to disclose the destination of the warheads.

Ukraine agreed to remove warheads based on its territory for destruction under a trilateral deal agreed with Russia and the United States in January.

In return, Kiev is due to receive cash and enriched uranium for its nuclear power stations. Russia's Nuclear Energy Ministry said Friday that the first load of fuel for the Chernobyl power station had already left.

Ukrainian officials said Saturday the liquidation of Kiev's nuclear arsenal would go ahead according to plan.

But President Leonid Kravchuk, in an interview broadcast from Washington, suggested fulfilment of nuclear disarmament pacts could depend on Russian gas supplies. Russia, which says Kiev owes it 1.5 trillion roubles (\$900 million) for gas, cut daily deliveries by 80 million cubic metres this weekend.

"Fulfillment of all agreements, including agreements on nuclear commitments, is possible only if the economy works," he told Commonwealth Television during the Washington visit.

"If tomorrow factories come to a halt in Ukraine, and this is a reality if there is no gas, what carrying out of commitments can be spoken of?"

Ukraine will fulfil its (nuclear) commitment," Mr. Kravchuk told a news conference in Washington before Gazprom announced its latest cuts.

The three-way disarmament agreement called for Ukraine to transfer at least 200 nuclear warheads to Russia within 10 months and turn over the rest of its nuclear stockpile "in the shortest possible time."

In addition, Ukraine's 17 SS-24 missiles — the most dangerous in its arsenal — should be deactivated within 10 months by having their warheads removed.

To begin the process of compensating Ukraine for giving up its weapons, Russia was to provide Ukraine within the same period with fuel assemblies for nuclear power stations containing 100 tonnes of low-enriched uranium.

Ukrainian power stations are suffering acute shortages of fuel and, if Russia cuts gas supplies, the republic's fragile economy could grind to a halt.

"We are cutting gas supplies to Ukraine by another 80 million cubic metres a day. This will be done gradually... I don't know when it will be completed, by tomorrow (Sunday) morning or whenever," a Gazprom official said.

Gazprom has said it will keep up shipments to Ukraine that are used as payment for pipeline transit to customers in Western Europe.

Japan coalition eyes split at poll time

TOYO (R) — Japan's ruling coalition, after almost splitting over a cabinet reshuffle, has polarised into two camps prepared to go to the polls at election time, leaders revealed Sunday.

Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa's hand-picked last cabinet reshuffle has cabinet members in a potential coalition with the opposition group led by the Bank of Japan.

By Sunday, some of his government partners were speaking openly of creating new political groups before elections that could be called later this year or next after a new election system has been set.

It is impossible now for the ruling coalition partners to form a united party," said Secretary General Tomiichi Moriyama, head of the largest coalition group, on television.

But we do want to make a new party of our own to fight the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP), he said.

After 35 years of continuous rule, the LDP lost the July 1993 elections and was forced aside by

Mr. Hosokawa's alliance of LDP splinter groups and traditional opposition parties like the Socialists.

But the LDP, still the largest single party, remains a powerful force and could engineer a return to power.

To counter an LDP offensive, liberals in the Socialist Party are considering forming a new party with centrists like the Democratic Socialist Party (DSP) and the New Party Sakigake, whose leader Masayoshi Takemura was targeted in last week's reshuffle scheme.

Mr. Hosokawa's Japan New Party looked likely to seek a tie-up with Ichiro Ozawa and his LDP-breakaway Japan Renewal Party.

Socialist Secretary-General Wataru Kubo told a separate television debate his party was ready to drop its adherence to Leninism to become part of a new political force.

"We're not going to alter our political ideology... But we can become more flexible and cooperate (with political partners) by adopting new policies," Mr. Kubo said.

"The coalition's eight parties are going to go through a reor-

ganisation," Mr. Kubo said. "We think we can cooperate with the DSP and the New Party Sakigake."

Sakigake Chairman Shouchi Ide, appearing along with Mr. Kubo, welcomed the change of heart.

"If the Socialist can change their policies and idea, which they must following the collapse of the Soviet Union and changes in East Europe, then we're ready to work with them."

The prime minister is largely seen as responsible for creating a new rift that almost split the coalition. Government was paralysed for two weeks as Mr. Hosokawa, prodded on by Mr. Ozawa, attempted to fire Mr. Takemura as chief of staff.

At the root of the wrangle was a power struggle between Mr. Takemura and Mr. Ozawa, who were Mr. Hosokawa's two closest advisers when the cabinet was formed seven months ago.

After the prime minister embraced many of Mr. Ozawa's ideas, including a controversial plan to introduce a new value-added tax, an infuriated Takemura refused to back Mr. Hosokawa on policy.

U.S. gunman killed after taking hostages

SALT LAKE CITY (R) — A gunman who held 18 people hostage at a library Saturday afternoon to blow them up with a bomb was shot and killed by one of the hostages, an off-duty sheriff's deputy, police said.

Police spokesman Marty Vuyk told Reuters the six-hour ordeal began, coincidentally, as a group of Tibetan monks finished a morning prayer at the downtown library, across from city hall.

He said the monks were not among those taken hostage, who remained at the site, praying for the hostages' safety.

The gunman, identified as Clifford Lynn Draper, 30, forced the people into a room at the busy library where he

claimed to have a bomb and demanded a letter be given to the local police chief, Mr. Vuyk said. He also demanded money, gold, platinum and pardons from Utah Governor Mike Leavitt and President Bill Clinton.

It was not immediately clear why Mr. Draper wanted a pardon, although police said he has a criminal record in California.

"I have a bomb, I can blow you up or shoot you," one hostage quoted the gunman as saying.

The sheriff's deputy, Lloyd Prescott, who was teaching a training course nearby, quietly joined the hostages in the room where they were being held — in effect volunteering himself as a hostage.

Deputy Prescott, who is being hailed as a hero, waited until he felt the moment was right and shot the gunman four times in the chest, killing him. Mr. Draper was pronounced dead later at a local hospital.

Police later said they detonated the bomb, which used a curling iron as a trigger device.

"It could have been very deadly if it functioned as intended," Mr. Vuyk said.

The other hostages were released unharmed. One woman, a diabetic, went without insulin and was taken to a hospital.

Two members of a SWAT team dispatched to the scene were slightly hurt when they tried to break a window after hearing the gun shots.

Manning sparks flying Hawks past Pacers

ATLANTA (R) — Danny Manning continued to pay quick dividends for Atlanta as he rose to the occasion on both ends of the court in the final seconds to lift the Hawks to a 90-88 win over the red-hot Indiana Pacers Saturday.

Manning hit a driving layup with 7.3 seconds to score the final points of the game as the Hawks registered their sixth straight victory and fifth since acquiring him in a trade for longtime Atlanta superstar Dominique Wilkins.

Manning, who had 17 points, 12 rebounds, six steals and three blocks, sealed the win with a vicious rejection of a layup try by Byron Scott as time expired.

Reggie Miller scored 12 to lead the Pacers, who had their four-game winning streak snapped but have still won 14 of their last 17 games. Kevin Willis scored 22 to lead the Hawks, who increased their Eastern Conference-leading record to 41-16 and won for the ninth successive time at home.

After Indiana took a 51-39 halftime lead, the Hawks opened the third quarter with a 21-8 burst for a lead. Willis scored eight points and Manning added seven in the surge.

The game sawsawed back and forth until a dunk by Indiana's Dale Davis with 10.9 seconds left knotted it at 88-88 and set the stage for Manning's late-game heroics.

In Seattle, Shawn Kemp scored 14 of his 25 points in the pivotal third quarter as the SuperSonics pulled away for a 114-98 victory over the Sacramento Kings.

Seattle, which trailed 59-55 at the half, outscored the Kings 34-19 in the third quarter and never looked back.

Kendall Gill added 21 points for the Sonics, who have won four straight and improved their league-best record to 41-14. Kemp, who was 10-of-16 from the field, also had 14 rebounds.

Spud Webb scored 21 points for Sacramento, who made 61 per cent of their shots in the first half, but scored only 39 points in the second half.

At Golden State, Latrell Sprewell scored 12 of his 21 points in a third quarter run as the Warriors sent the Charlotte Hornets to their eighth successive defeat 129-112.

Jeff Grayer added a season-high 20 points for the Warriors, who have won three in a row.

Dell Curry scored 21 points to pace the Hornets, who have lost 16 of their last 17 games. After Golden State took a 69-57 lead at the half, Charlotte closed to 76-71 with 6:47 remaining in the third on a slam dunk by Kenny Gattison. The warriors then went on a 20-6 burst to close out the period.

In Milwaukee, Erick Murdock scored 28 points and the Milwaukee Bucks the Detroit

Pistons without a field goal for a five-minute stretch in the fourth quarter on the way to a 117-108 triumph.

Joe Dumars matched a season-high with 42 points for the Pistons, who dropped their sixth straight. Vin Baker scored 24 points and pulled down 10 rebounds for the Bucks.

After falling back early, Detroit pulled even after three quarters and led 94-92 with 9:05 left. Milwaukee's defence stiffened, though, and the Bucks replied with a 12-2 spurt.

In Houston, Hakeem Olajuwon scored 30 points, including four during a 9-0 run to open the second half, as the Rockets ripped the reeling Los Angeles Clippers 124-107.

Kenny Smith added 24 points on 10-of-13 shooting for Houston, winners of five of their last seven games.

Dominique Wilkins scored 20 points, on just 9-of-23 from the field, and Charles Outlaw had 17 to lead the Clippers, who played without Ron Harper and Loy Vaught because of injuries and lost for the ninth time in 11 games.

Houston, Midwest leaders, improved to 23-4 at home.

In Dallas, Karl Malone had 34 points and 13 rebounds, and Jeff Humphries scored 11 of his 15 points in the decisive third quarter as the Utah Jazz defeated the Mavericks 103-90.

Jeff Hornacek added 17 points for the Jazz, who ran their season-high winning streak to eight games. Rookie Jamal Mashburn scored 22 for the Mavericks.

Dallas was within two, 66-64, with 4:34 left in the third, but the Jazz closed out the quarter with an 18-8 run.

Utah improved to 9-1 since the All-Star break.

In Miami, Glen Rice scored 32 points and Rony Seikaly added 22 as the sizzling Heat crushed the struggling Philadelphia 76ers 120-83 for their seventh win in a row.

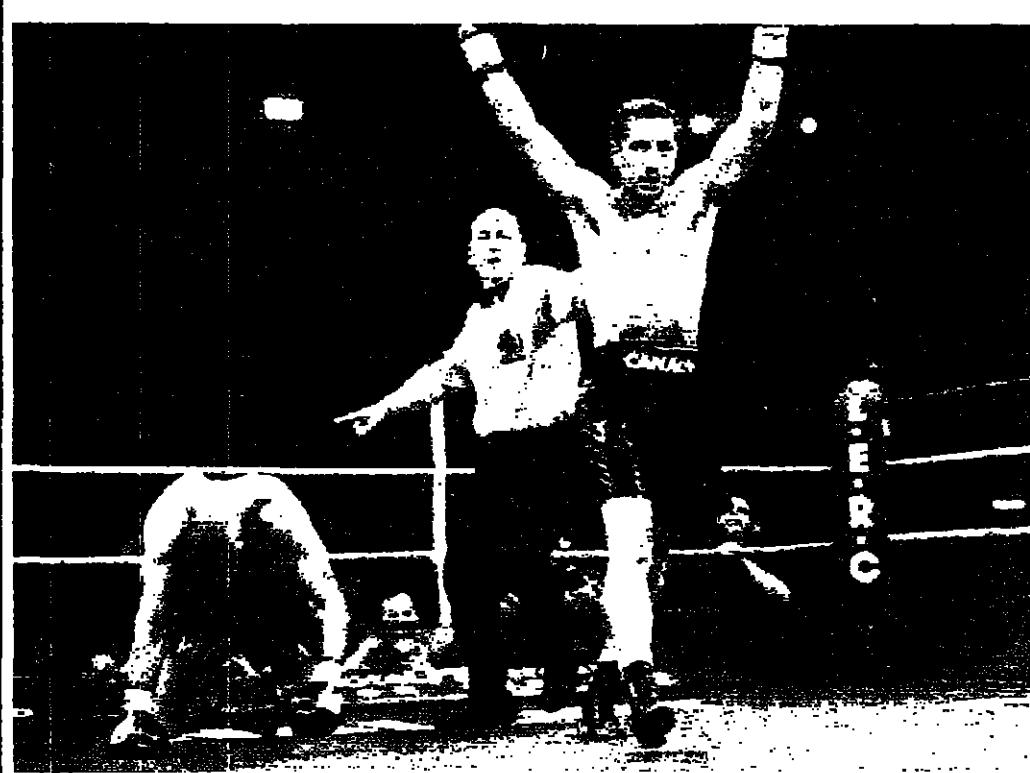
Miami, coming off a 5-0 road trip, never trailed in handing the Sixers their 12th consecutive defeat. The slide is the club's longest since the 1972-73 campaign, when the Sixers won just nine games, the worst season in league history.

Jeff Malone scored 21 points to lead Philadelphia.

Rice scored 12 of his points in the fourth quarter when Miami outscored Philadelphia 36-18.

In Washington, Michael Adams scored 17 of his 29 points in the first quarter, and the Bullets built a 14-point halftime lead and held on to defeat the Los Angeles Lakers 124-118.

Tom Gugliotta and Don Maclean each had 25 for the Bullets, who beat Los Angeles for the first time in four tries at home dating back to December 1989.



Fabrizio Tiozzo raises his arms in victory after he knocked out Dutchman Eddy Smulders in the seventh round of their bout Saturday to become Europe's new middle-weight champion (AFP photo)

Di Centa captures 30-km race at Lahti ski games

LAHTI, Finland (AP) — Leading from start to finish, Manuela Di Centa of Italy won the 30-kilometre freestyle World Cup race Sunday, beating her old rival Ljubov Egorova of Russia by more than a minute.

Di Centa finished the cross-country course in one hour, 22 minutes and 50.5 seconds. The 1-2 placing matched Di Centa's and Egorova's finish in the 30k at the Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway.

Now they will battle for the overall World Cup title in two shorter races, a 10k freestyle in Falun, Sweden, next weekend, and a freestyle 5k in Thunder Bay, Canada, in two weeks.

Di Centa, with 626 points, is

only fourteen shy of the leading Egorova. But that difference can easily be made up. One hundred points are awarded to a race winner, while 80 goes to second place and 60 for third.

Sunday's race was dominated by Italy and Russia, Stefano Belmondo was third, beaten by almost two minutes, and Russians Nina Gavriluk and Svetlana Nageykina took fourth and fifth. Sixth place went to Antonina Ordina, a Russian-born skier who now represents Sweden.

Another Russian, Yelena Valbe, who had faint hopes of challenging for World Cup honours, skied strongly up to the halfway point — being

second at 12 kilometres — but faded badly. She dropped from sixth to 13th during the last five kilometres.

In other events, the large hill (K-120) World Cup ski jumping competition was cancelled because of high swirling winds.

The tricky winds even caused a top jumper — Germany's Jens Weissflog — to fall in the team competition Saturday night. Earlier Saturday, Weissflog convincingly won the normal hill (K-90) competition.

The men's cross country World Cup title was decided Saturday when Vladimir Smirnov of Kazakhstan won the 15k freestyle, beating Norway's Bjorn Dahlie.

Sydney Olympics should not include golf—activists

KUALA LUMPUR (R) — Environmental activists fighting to ensure golf is not included in the Sydney Olympics in 2000 Saturday sent the first batch of written protests to the International Olympic Committee (IOC).

Five hundred signatures against the proposed inclusion of golf in the games were sent to IOC President Juan Antonio Samaranch by the Global Anti-Golf Movement (GAGM).

The Malaysian Chapter of Friends of the Earth (SAM) environment group is coordinating the worldwide signature campaign, which was launched last December following moves by the IOC to make golf an Olympic event.

"Since we started compiling information on problems related to golf courses and resorts, we have been shocked by the scale of the devastation," said GAGM coordinator Gen Morita.

"To make golf an Olympic sport would amount to the IOC endorsing an activity which destroys the environment and brings suffering to local people," he said in a statement.

He said that in a separate letter to Samaranch, the group had highlighted cases where the building of golf courses had polluted water and created water shortages, evicted local communities and encouraged "dubious land speculation."

The GAGM was founded by

the Japan-based Global Network for Anti-Golf Course Action, the Asia-Pacific Peoples' Environment Network and Britain's Institute of Tourism and Development Studies, at Bedford College of Higher Education.

Morita said Indonesia temporarily banned new golf courses after students, environmentalists and farmers protested against the conversion of agricultural land into a golf course in west Java.

"In Thailand, which has a severe water shortage, public opinion has turned against golf courses due to the huge quantities of water needed to maintain the lush greens and artificial water bodies," he said.

"...Malaysia declared last December that there were far too many golf courses in the country, and said it would no longer compromise on the stringent regulations governing them."

Morita said that according to surveys, 80 per cent of South Koreans were opposed to the boom in golf courses in the country and that 36 citizens' groups had petitioned for a halt in the construction of new courses.

Sampras, Korda reach final of Champions Cup

INDIAN WELLS, California (R) — World number one Pete Sampras showed that he can produce great shots in tight spots when he beat third seed Stefan Edberg Saturday to reach the final of the \$1.72 million Champions Cup tennis tournament.

"It almost always comes down to one or two points when Stefan and I play," said Sampras, who levelled his record against Edberg to 5-5 with the 6-3 3-6 6-4 victory in one hour and 55 minutes.

In Sunday's final, Sampras will face 10th-seeded Czech Petr Korda, who needed just 66 minutes to dispose of unseeded American Aaron Krickstein 6-4 6-4.

The 14th-ranked Korda used his powerful, yet crafty left-handed serve to keep the 38th-ranked Krickstein off balance. Korda also successfully avoided long baseline rallies

that would have favoured the American.

Sampras scored the lone service break of the final set in the last game to clinch victory. On his second match point, Sampras hit a forehand return winner off an Edberg first serve.

Neither Edberg nor Sampras had dropped a set on the way to the semifinals and Saturday each of the tight sets was determined by a single break as the two produced high quality tennis from the service line.

"To be honest, I was having a tough time with his serve, especially his second serve," admitted Sampras, the reigning Wimbledon, U.S. Open and Australian Open champion.

"I just went after those returns in the last game and that made the difference," added Sampras, who delivered 13 aces in the match.

Sampras faced just one break point in the entire third set and saved it in typically aggressive fashion. He followed his serve to the net and hit a sharply angled volley that forced Edberg to hit a defensive lob long.

"He took his chances when he got them in that last game and when I had a chance to break him in the third set I didn't take it," said Edberg, a former number one and Wimbledon champion.

"You don't get many chances against Pete, so you've got to take them when they're there," added the fourth-ranked Swede.

"That's why he's number one, because he makes you play the big points."

Korda broke service in the third game of each set against Krickstein — the only breaks of their 66-minute match.

Graf and Sanchez Vicario reach Florida Slims final

DELRAY BEACH, Florida (R) — Steffi Graf was tested Saturday for the first time this year and still has yet to drop a set after fighting off Helena Sukova to reach the final of the \$400,000 Virginia Slims of Florida tennis tournament.

The top-seeded Graf beat fifth seed Sukova 7-5 6-4 to make it 21 consecutive straight-set victories in 1994 and said afterward that the 18th-ranked Czech provided the toughest competition she has faced all year.

"There's no doubt about it," said the world number one, who was to go for her fourth successive title of the year Sunday against second seed Arant-

xa Sanchez Vicario.

The second-ranked Spaniard earned her second shot of the year at Graf with a 6-2 6-3 victory over 14th-seeded American Chanda Rubin.

Sanchez's last showdown with Graf resulted in a crushing 6-0 6-2 defeat in the Australian open final in January.

"She played unbelievably that day. I've never seen her play as good as that day," said Sanchez, who has won nine of 29 past meetings with the German star.

Graf continued her personal dominance of Sukova by raising her record against the Czech serve and volleyer to

21-1. Graf's only loss came in their very first meeting in 1983.

Sukova, playing an aggressive game and taking advantage of Graf's uneven play from the service line, briefly led each set.

But Sukova's risk taking and eight double faults — including two in the final game — caused her demise. She neutralised 30 winners with 33 unforced errors in the one hour and 22 minute rematch of last year's U.S. Open final.

"The first set surprised me how strong her serve and volleys were. Her volleys were very good in the first set," said Graf, who has not lost a match since last November.

Dawes and Scherbo triumph in Orlando

ORLANDO, Fla. (AP) — Olympians Dominique Dawes and Vitaly Scherbo tuned up for the 1994 World Gymnastics Championships with convincing victories Saturday in the McDonald's American Cup.

Dawes, 17, of Silver Spring, Md., won the women's two-day optional all-around com-

petition with a score of 39.387 points.

"I felt I did the best on the floor exercise," said Dawes, who energised the crowd of 7,412 with a score of 9.85 on the floor in her final event of the day. "That's a new routine for me, and I usually don't smile during that routine."

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMMAM HIRSH

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SPOT THE WINNING LINE

Neither vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH

♠ 10

♥ 9 8 6

♦ K Q 7 6

♣ 6 3

WEST

♠ 9 7 6 5

♥ 8 4 3 2

♦ K 10 7 4

♣ 3 2

♠ 10 9

EAST

♠ 8 4 3 2

♥ Q 5

♦ A 5 4

♣ K 8 7 4

SOUTH

♠ A K

♥ A 3 2

♦ J 10 8

♣ A Q J 5 2

The bidding:

South West North East

1 ♠ Pass 1 ♠ Pass

2 NT Pass 3 NT Pass

Pass Pass

Opening lead: Six of ♠

Only the four top cards in a suit

are assigned a value by the point

count. Yet it is often the rank of the

spot cards in a suit that determines

whether a contract succeeds or fails.

Here is a beautiful example of what

we mean.

South's auction showed a bal-

anced hand of about 19 points. With

7 points in high cards and a fair five-

card suit, North had more than

enough to accept.

Despite the double stopper in the

suit, spades were declarer's weak-

ness. When West found that lead,

the contract was in jeopardy. With

only four fast tricks, declarer would

have to develop the minor suits to

bring home the contract. The fact

that there was no entry to the di-

amonds meant the only chance to

collect four tricks in that suit was to

find a defender with a doubleton

ace, but even then a second club

trick would still be needed. An ad-

ded complication was that declarer

could not afford to give up the lead

more than once.

Now look at those interesting di-

amond spot cards. Their solidity af-

forded declarer the chance of

tackling both minor suits for the

tricks needed.

After winning the king of spades,

declarer led the jack of diamonds

and overtook it with dummy's

queen. East could not afford to take

the ace, so declarer took advantage

of being on the table to finesse the

jack of clubs successfully. The ten of

diamonds was overtaken with the

king and again East was forced to

hold up, but that left declarer on

the board to repeat the club finesse.

When that won, declarer cashed

the ace of clubs and surrendered a

club. No matter what the defenders

did declarer was assured of two

spade tricks, a heart, two diamonds

and four clubs!

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	PHILADELPHIA	PLAZA	CONCORD	AMMOUN THEATRE	Nabil Al Mashini Theatre	AHLAN THEATRE
T O D A Y	Far And Away Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 8:30, 10:30	ROUND TRIP TO HEAVEN Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	CONCORD '1' The Fugitive Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 CONCORD '2' Filofax Shows: 12:30, 3:00, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30	Opening Soon A political comedy Forbidden X Forbidden	presents a play entitled: Al Iim Nuron A popular political comedy Actors: Abeer Issa, Daoud Jalajel, Hassan Al Shaer, Fuad Shomali In addition to other comedians Every night at 8:15 Tickets are sold all day Coming soon: The next play	Nabil and Hisham Theatre presents Ahlam Arab Summit Conference (

NEWS IN BRIEF

Iraq keeps up blasts at Clinton

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq will not sit idly by if U.S. President Bill Clinton succeeds in convincing the U.N. Security Council to maintain the tough Gulf war embargo on the country, the government newspaper said on Sunday. "If the sanctions are renewed this means that Washington is embarking on the implementation of the most dangerous chapter in its great conspiracy against Iraq," Al Jumhouniyah said. "This Iraq shall never accept and it will be impossible for it to stand hands folded and its people suffer under the load of the embargo and its destructive results," it added. Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz warned Mr. Clinton on Friday that the U.S. would be made to pay for its insistence on maintaining the U.N. embargo against Iraq. Mr. Clinton on Thursday had said the United States would continue to apply economic sanctions against Iraq because of Baghdad's defiance of United Nations resolutions passed after the 1991 Gulf war.

E. German files spurred Ames probe

WASHINGTON (AP) — Material from former East German intelligence files spurred creation of a joint Central Intelligence Agency (CIA)-Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) investigation three years ago that ultimately led to the arrest of CIA official Aldrich H. Ames on spying charges. The Washington Post reported. The paper reported in Sunday's editions that some counterintelligence officials suspected as early as 1985 that U.S. spy operations had been compromised, but separate investigations languished for years until 1991 when the joint operation was forced. Citing unidentified official familiar with the Ames investigation, the Post said East German files revealed that all the spies the United States thought it had recruited in the Stasi intelligence service actually were double agents. The paper said that shook the CIA up enough to result in its agreeing to work with the FBI on an investigation. Investigators went on to draw up a list of approximately 200 people who had known the identities of the Stasi agents and also had known of earlier failed operations against the Soviet Union. Mr. Ames was among the 200 and by May 1993 had become the focus of an investigation the FBI called "Nightmover." He was arrested Feb. 21 because of concerns he might flee the country.

Kurdish-linked violence kills 20 in Turkey

ISTANBUL (R) — At least 20 people including 16 rebel Kurds and four soldiers, were killed in clashes in snow-blanketed eastern Turkey, Anatolia news agency reported Sunday. Anatolia, quoting provincial authorities, said soldiers killed 11 guerrillas of the separatist Kurdistan Labour Party (PKK) on a plateau of Erzurum province on Sunday after they tried to ambush the troops, on a week-long military operation. Provincial Governor Oguz Berberoglu said up to two metres of snow covered the area. He said guerrillas had buried their dead in the snow and relieved the bodies of another 10 to 15 rebels would be found when the snow melted. "The escape route has been sealed off," Mr. Berberoglu said. Five PKK men and four soldiers were killed in clashes on the slopes of the Mount Ararat, in the eastern province of Agri, Anatolia said. It said six soldiers were wounded. It did not say when the incidents took place.

Tunisia election campaigning starts

TUNIS (R) — Campaigning for Tunisia's presidential and parliamentary elections on March 20 started on Sunday. President Zine Al Abidine Ben Ali is standing unopposed. Leaders of all opposition parties and candidates for the legislative poll voiced support for Mr. Ben Ali's bid for a second five-year term at a Tunis rally chaired by the president. Mr. Ben Ali, prime minister at the time, took power in November 1987 by having veteran President Habib Bourguiba officially declared senile and unfit to rule. He was reelected in 1989 on the platform of his ruling Rassemblement Constitutionnel Democratique (RCD). Opposition parties are certain to enter parliament for the first time since Tunisia's independence in 1956 thanks to an amendment to the electoral law. But the banned fundamentalist movement, Al Nahdha, which presented "independent" candidates in 1989 is not contesting this time. The movement has gone underground after the jailing or flight into exile of hundreds of its leaders over the past three years.

Top Somali warlord spurns council offer

MOGADISHU (R) — A coalition headed by top Somali warlord Mohammed Farah Aidede rejected on Sunday an offer to join an all-party council agreed in Cairo to restore peace. "Everything conducted outside Somalia is only a way of creating trouble, a way of delaying a solution to Somalia's problems," said Issa Muhammad, spokesman for General Aidede's Somali National Alliance (SNA). "No one man can say 'I offer this,' no one has the power to say 'you take this and I take that.' Together we have to sit down and decide," Mr. Issa added. Leaders of 12 Somali factions meeting in Cairo said in a statement that they had agreed to set up an all-party salvation council in a move to restore peace in the broken country (see page 2).

Shevardnadze starts tour in Prague

PRAGUE (AP) — Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze, en route to Washington, Sunday paid a brief visit to Prague to drum up support for his peace plans in the forthcoming U.N. Security Council talks. Mr. Shevardnadze met with President Vaclav Havel for an hour of talks characterised by the president as "very interesting and very intense." The Czech republic is a non-permanent member of the Security Council, which is scheduled to discuss U.N. peace activities in Georgia on Wednesday. Mr. Shevardnadze was on his way to the United States for talks with President Bill Clinton, as well as international bankers in hopes of getting financial aid for his country, which has been wracked by civil war. "I seek support for a just solution, and my emphasis is on 'just,'" Mr. Shevardnadze said about the prospect for peace in Georgia, which lost the western province of Abkhazia to separatists last year. Mr. Havel said the Czechs would support any solution that would work towards peace in Georgia.

Arafat sees mediators in Cairo

(Continued from page 1)

Clinton administration to cut off contributions from Americans to radical settler groups. "The money is coming from the New York Borough of Brooklyn. We raised the question, but we can't do more than that," he said.

Diplomats in Cairo say they are confident the talks will eventually resume but it is not yet clear how the mediators will find a compromise between the PLO and Israeli positions.

In Oslo, chief Palestinian negotiator Nabil Shaath said once the PLO-Israeli talks resume, a breakthrough on agreement for Israeli troop withdrawal from parts of the occupied territories is two weeks away.

"If we address the security situation as soon as we get back to the table, we should be

able within two weeks to conclude," Dr. Shaath told a news conference.

Rejecting the view of the Israeli government that one man acting alone carried out the mosque massacre in Hebron, Dr. Shaath said there was a group of people behind the attack and that it was a conspiracy to halt the peace process.

Before the massacre, we had plans that the coming two weeks would have been enough to overcome all the problems," Dr. Shaath said.

"We felt that these people have struck at a time after learning that we were going to sign an agreement on March 10," Dr. Shaath said, "and that we had made a breakthrough in Cairo that was going to lead to withdrawal of the Israeli army within the time that was allotted in the agreement that was negotiated here in Oslo."

King briefed on AL al Bait University

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Sunday received at the Royal Court members of the Royal Commission for AL al Bait University and thanked them for their efforts to establish the university.

King Hussein assured the commission members of his total support and assistance to the commission in order to enable it to fulfill its task.

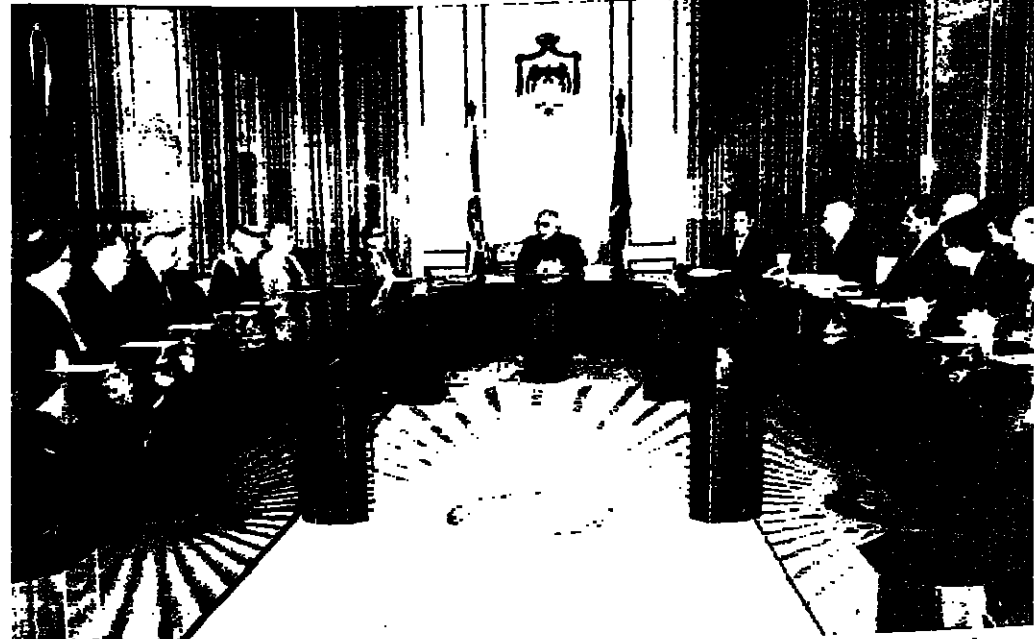
AL al Bait University President Adnan Al Bakhit briefed King Hussein on the university's philosophy, programmes and plans, outlining the progress in establishing the university, which will be based in Mafrqa.

The university, Dr. Bakhit said, will be distinguished in its academic programmes since it will focus on Islamic issues and will be teaching the languages of Islamic countries.

Dr. Bakhit voiced appreciation for King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan for the support extended to the commission.

He also thanked the Armed Forces and other Jordanian universities which have contributed to the AL al Bait establishment process.

The meeting was attended by Royal Court Chief Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker and the King's advisors.



His Majesty King Hussein Sunday meets with members of a committee charged with establishing AL al Bait University (Petra photo)

Greek actress and culture minister Mercuri dies at 71

NEW YORK (Agencies) — Melina Mercuri, the actress who gained fame in the film "Never on Sunday" and later used her position as culture minister of Greece to fight for the return of ancient artifacts, died Sunday. She was 71.

Mercuri died at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Centre at 8:50 a.m. (1330 GMT) of complications from lung cancer, said hospital spokeswoman Pat Tur.

After her acting career, Mercuri turned to politics. She was the first woman ever to hold a senior cabinet post in Greece.

Mercuri was culture minister under three Socialist governments, from 1981 to 1989, and was appointed to post again in October when Andreas Papandreu's Socialists returned to power after four years in the opposition.

Her first eight years as culture minister were defined by an international crusade to bring the Elgin marbles back to Greece. The priceless marble statues were removed from the Parthenon in Athens by Scottish antiquarian Thomas Bruce, earl of Elgin, in the early 19th century and is in the British Museum.

Although she suffered from lung cancer and underwent surgery after being hospitalised in New York on Feb. 3, Mercuri had repeatedly ignored doctors' advice to stop smoking. Her condition worsened Saturday.

Mercuri also led a failed campaign to promote Greece as host for the Olympic Games in 1996, the centenary of the modern games, which were revived in Athens in 1896.

Mercuri always projected a strong pride in her homeland and heritage. "If I did not love Greece so much I would be lazy, egocentric and a coward," she said in an interview.

A tall, natural blonde with green eyes, Mercuri was born



Melina Mercuri (1922-94)

to a prominent political family on October 18, 1925.

She trained at the Athens drama school and her film career took off in 1955 when she won the best actress award at the Cannes Film Festival for her role in "Stella."

It was in Cannes that she met American film director Jules Dassin, who later directed her in "Never on Sunday" and married her in 1966.

Mercuri was nominated for an Academy Award for her role as a warm-hearted, carefree prostitute in the 1960 film. She also had leading roles in more than 70 films and theatrical productions.

One New York critic wrote: "Mercuri has the sun-bleached good looks of Ingrid Bergman, the glamour of Lauren Bacall and the passion of Anna Magnani."

Her films and songs were banned by the military junta which seized power and ruled Greece from 1967 to 1974 and a warrant was issued for her arrest.

Her stinging denunciation of the junta in speeches and demonstrations around the world cost Mercuri her citizenship, but it was restored after the dictatorship fell.

It was during this period that she allied herself with the Panhellenic Socialist Movement of Mr. Papandreu.

Gramm: Whitewater could doom Clinton

WASHINGTON (R) — Senator Phil Gramm, a possible candidate for the 1996 Republican presidential nomination, suggested Sunday that President Bill Clinton could be forced from office by the so-called Whitewater affair unless he quickly made public any "dirty linen."

"I don't expect the president to take my advice, but I think if the president wants to serve his term out, he's going to have to begin by leveling with the American people," Mr. Gramm, a Texas Republican, said on the ABC programme "This Week with David Brinkley."

Pressed on whether he

meant that the president could be headed for impeachment because of persistent questions about the Whitewater matter, which centres on a land development deal Mr. Clinton invested in while he was Arkansas governor, Mr. Gramm said he did not.

But, he added: "I think the president is getting deeper in a hole. And I think if the president continues to have officials of the regulatory agencies over to the White House to brief staff, if the president continues to have White House counsel interfering in investigations, that can quickly become obstruction of justice if you're not

careful about it."

He equated Mr. Clinton's problems with the coverage of the Watergate affair that eventually drove Richard Nixon from office in August 1974.

"I think the president has got to put the facts out on the table, put all the dirty linen out there and draw all the questions," he said.

The chairman of the powerful House of Representatives Ways and Means Committee left open Sunday the possibility of holding hearings into controversial White House contacts with federal officials probing Mr. Clinton's ties to the failed Arkansas savings and loan.

U.N. food convoy allowed into Kabul

KABUL (Agencies) — The United Nations on Sunday made its first food delivery to this battered capital in more than two months as the renegade prime minister temporarily lifted his blockade.

It marked the end of a five-day standoff between the U.N. and Prime Minister Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, who controls the outskirts of Kabul, including the main roads, Mr. Hekmatyar has previously refused to allow supplies to enter the city centre, held by his rival, President Burhanuddin Rabbani.

Mr. Hekmatyar said he rejected after U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali made a personal plea in a letter delivered Saturday.

"Because the secretary general of the U.N. has himself requested, we agreed to unconditionally allow these trucks to enter (Kabul)," Mr. Hekmatyar told a small group of journalists.

However, Mr. Hekmatyar said it was a one-time only deal and accused the U.N. of using the convoy to score propaganda points.

The food is badly needed in Kabul, a city devastated by the brutal civil war between the fighting factions. Up to 500,000 people have been driven from their homes since a major battle erupted Jan. 1.

There is no electricity or

proper sanitation. There is a shortage of clean water and many people are dependent on food handouts that are running dangerously low.

The six trucks, with 90 tonnes of wheat, have been held up since Wednesday. They spent the last several days parked in Bagrami, a Hekmatyar-controlled area 20 kilometres southeast of the capital.

Under the agreement between Mr. Hekmatyar and the U.N., three trucks were sent to the U.N. compound in Kabul. That food will be distributed Monday.

The other three trucks will be unloaded in areas controlled by Mr. Hekmatyar and his allies on the southern and eastern fringes of the city.

Saturday's shipment was the first U.N. food delivery to reach Kabul since the fighting began Jan. 1. The supplies are not nearly enough to solve Kabul's food shortages, but the U.N. hopes it can make more deliveries soon despite Mr. Hekmatyar's resistance.

Meanwhile, the fighting continues. There have been periods of relative calm during the Holy Month of Ramadan, which lasts for about one more week. Most observers expect heavy fighting to resume soon after Ramadan ends.

Abu Halima is a victim of injustice — relatives

KAHRA AL DAWWARA, Egypt (R) — Relatives of Mahmud Abu Halima, one of four men convicted in New York on Friday of bombing the World Trade Centre, believe he is a victim of injustice.

"The whole thing is an injustice, it's all unfair," said Mr. Abu Halima's mother on being told her son had been found guilty.

His father's face flinched for a second. "There is no God but God, that is all I will say," said Mohammad Abu Halima before closing the door to their small bungalow in this town, near the Mediterranean city of Alexandria.

It was in this house that Mr. Abu Halima was arrested by Egyptian police last March and handed over to the United States on charges that he took part in the Feb. 26 bombing of New York's World Trade Centre.

Mr. Abu Halima and three co-defendants face up to life imprisonment when they are sentenced in May for the attack that killed six people and injured over 1,000.

Mr. Abu Halima's parents, who had not seen him for 12 years when he visited them last March shortly after the bomb-

ing, stopped talking to the media ever since his arrest. Mostafa Abu Halima, Mahmud's uncle, said he had seen his nephew on the television news and could not believe the verdict.

"What can I say? It's his destiny. He is like my son. He didn't have anything to do with this operation. The jury found him guilty but there were no witnesses. He is a victim of injustice," Mustafa Abu Halima said.

The five-month trial produced 207 witnesses and 1,003 exhibits but no witnesses who saw the defendants at the scene of the blast.

Prosecutors alleged that Mr. Abu Halima had helped mix chemicals used to make the bomb. Much of the evidence against him consisted of records of phone calls between him and the other defendants.

Mr. Abu Halima left Egypt for Germany in 1981, and went to New York four years later where he worked as a driver.

Mr. Abu Halima's uncle said Mahmud belonged to the Muslim militant group the Gamaa Al Islamiyah during his university days in Egypt but said he had not been involved in any militant activities.

Saleh vows to defend Yemeni unity

(Continued from page 1)

the relative safety of the capital, Sanaa.

There has been a lull in the fighting for about five days, but many believe matters could come to a head later in March with the end of the fighting month of Ramadan.

"We are told to keep 10 days' stock of food in the house in case civil unrest occurs and we are confined to our houses," said Paul Winder, 31, a Londoner working for British Gas in Sanaa.

Amman to have partial municipal polls

(Continued from page 1)

"Democracy is a way of life," that cannot be applied on selective basis, said Deputy Mustafa Shneikat while Deputy Sa'd Hayel Srour said municipal elections for Amman "have nothing to do with democracy" as the concern is to have an able council run the difficult affairs of the capital.

IAF spokesman Hamzeh Mansour said that democracy requires that elections be held and "our people are capable of choosing (qualified) repre-

sentatives.

When the issue was put to vote 39 out of 56 lawmakers present voted in favour of having the government appoint the mayor.

The House will Wednesday resume its debate of the draft law which proposes unified election dates for all municipal councils in the country.

Amman is the only city in the Kingdom that will not be able to elect all members of its municipal council under the draft legislation.

COLUMN

Hirohito's widow turns 91

TOKYO (AP) — The late Emperor Hirohito's widow, Empress Dowager Nagako, turned 91 Sunday, making her the second-longest living empress in Japanese history. Empress Nagako spent the early afternoon hearing recitations of greeting poems and receiving gifts from members of the royal family, palace officials and friends at Tokyo's Imperial Palace. She was scheduled to meet with her son, Emperor Akihito, and his wife, Empress Michiko in the late afternoon. Frail and naturally shy, Empress Nagako has made few public appearances since her husband's death in 1989. She is confined to a wheelchair and spends most of her time within the precincts of Tokyo's sprawling palace grounds or at imperial villas near the capital. The only empress known to have lived longer than Empress Nagako is Empress Kaushi, wife of Emperor Go-Reizei, who reigned from 1045-1068. She lived to be 92 years old by the traditional method of counting, in which everyone celebrated their birthday on New Year's Day.

Princess Anne ends visit to Vietnam

HO CHI MINH CITY (AP) — Princess Anne ended the first visit to Vietnam by a member of the British royal family Sunday with a stop at Shell, the first major international oil company to return here after the Vietnam War. The Princess Royal, 43, the only daughter of Queen Elizabeth II, wore a red dress to cut a ribbon at the newly renovated office of Shell, which has invested about \$100 million since it returned to Vietnam in 1988. The company, which is 40 per cent British and 60 per cent Dutch, has about 80 employees across the country, 55 of whom are Vietnamese. General Manager Howard Gatiss called the visit by the Princess Royal "an important milestone in confirming Shell's commitment to resuming marketing operations in Vietnam."

White House wants to stop Clinton look-alike

TEMPLE TERRACE, Fla. (AP) — The White House wants to put a Bill Clinton look-alike out of business. Bad Boy, a Canadian furniture company, is using Tim Waters in its advertising, but a White House lawyer has asked the company to stop "the unauthorized use of the president's likeness." "I'm not sure if the White House knows it's me or if they think it really is the president," Mr. Waters said. "Why are they even spending time on this? Doesn't the White House have more important things to worry about?" The former Tampa real estate broker has turned professional Clinton impersonator. "Everybody shops at Bad Boy," says one advertisement featuring Mr. Waters standing next to company President Blayne Lastman. The ads have appeared in the Toronto Sun since January. The letter from White House Counsel Marvin Krislov warns that the president's name, image or words cannot be used for endorsements without permission. "Tim can't help how he looks," said Mr. Waters' agent, Randy Nolen. "He's going to be stuck with this for the rest of his life. Mr. Lastman isn't worried. 'Nowhere in the ad does Bad Boy say that the president's double is the commander-in-chief,' he said.

Spielberg gets Top Directors Guild Award

LOS ANGELES (Agencies) — The Directors Guild of America presented its top award for outstanding feature film to Steven Spielberg Saturday night for his work on "Schindler's List," the story of a German who saved Jews in his factory during the Holocaust. The awards are considered precursors of the Academy Awards, to be presented later this month. Spielberg was not present to accept the award for directing the outstanding feature film of 1993. The guild's top award, for which five nominees were vying this year, is closely watched because the guild winner typically repeats at the Academy Awards.

Amman moves 2,400 troops to camp

AMMAN (R) — The Jordanian army moved 2,400 troops to a camp near the Israeli border Sunday, a move seen as a response to the recent Israeli military operations in the West Bank. The troops were moved to a camp near the town of Ajlun, about 20 kilometres from the border. The move was part of a larger military exercise involving several thousand troops. The Jordanian army has been on high alert since the recent Israeli operations in the West Bank, which resulted in the deaths of several Jordanian citizens. The move to the camp near Ajlun is seen as a show of force and a commitment to the security of the Jordanian border.